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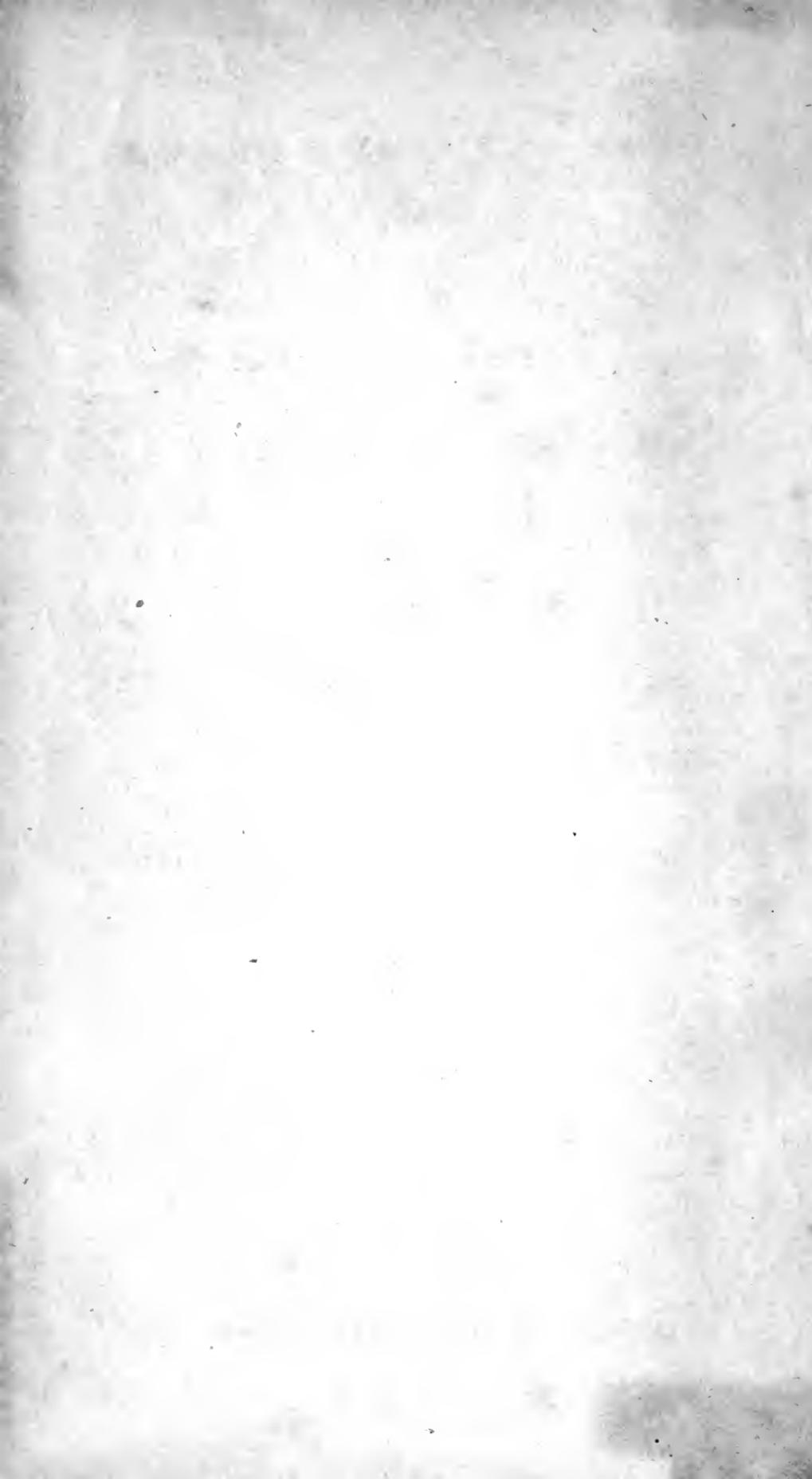
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MODERN STANDARD DRAMA.

No. LXXXIV.

T H E C A T S P A W.

A Comedy

IN FIVE ACTS.

William
BY DOUGLAS JERROLD.

WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS, CAST OF CHARACTERS,
COSTUMES, RELATIVE POSITIONS, ETC.

NEW YORK:

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

A full-blown Comedy, in five lawful acts, from the pen of one of the most eminent living English writers, makes its mark clearly in a series of Dramatic Publications, like those of the Modern Standard Drama. We know beforehand, that in a Play by Jerrold, there will be character, elaboration, point, hard hits, and home-thrusts in abundance. In a word, there will be "work and labor" faithfully done. The author of the "Catspaw" (a singular title by the way) never slighted his undertakings. The present Drama—which has been already produced at the Haymarket Theatre, London, with success, sustained by artists like J. Wallack, Keeley, Buckstone, Mrs. Keeley, and Webster, exhibits all the characteristics of Jerrold's genius in decided relief. The persons selected for exhibition are somewhat rigid in outline and set of speech. We can compare the Play to nothing so readily as a battery, with a rapid discharge of bullet-moulded speeches upon the audience. Some of the hits are local to London, but the infirmities and eccentricities of human nature generally are so often girded at as to make it appreciable, in its general scope, in New York as well. In Doctor Petgoose, quackery receives a brisk broadside, with its pliant gull, well-peppered, in the timid patient, Mr. Snowball. Not relying on events and violent transitions of incident, the "Catspaw" requires to be well acted to be entirely successful in its representation.

The critical reader cannot fail to observe that the acts are not divided, as is customary in the English Drama, into scenes, but that each act is a scene only broken by the exits and entrances of the different characters. This gives unity and sustained interest to the dialogue, and if rapidly played, compensates for the lack of stage bustle.

C. M.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Haymarket, 1850.</i>	<i>Burton's, N. Y.</i>
<i>Captain Burgonet</i>	Mr. Howe.	Mr. C. W. Clarke
<i>Mr. Snowball</i>	" Keeley.	" Burton.
<i>Doctor Petgoose</i>	" J. Wallack.	" Jordan.
<i>Appleface</i>	" Buckstone.	" Johnston.
<i>Coolcard</i> <i>alias</i> <i>Busby Knox, M.A.</i> <i>alias</i> <i>Chevalier Podovy</i>	}	" Webster.
<i>Audley</i>	" Selby.	" Holman.
<i>Dust</i>	" Tilbury.	" Rea.
<i>Duggins</i>	" Ellis.	" Hurley.
<i>Servant</i>	" A. Brindal.	" Wise.
<i>Mrs. Peachdown</i>	Miss Reynolds.	Mrs. Russell.
<i>Cassandra</i>	Mrs. S. L. Buckingham.	Miss Clark.
<i>Rosemary</i>	Mrs. Keeley.	Miss Chapman.

COSTUMES.

SNOWBALL.—Modern eccentric suits.

DR. PETGOOSE.—Black frock coat, white vest, black breeches, black silk stockings, and shoes.

CAPT. BURGONET.—Military frock, pants, chapeau, and feathers.

APPLEFACE.—English drummer's jacket and white pants. *Second dress:* Full black suit.

CHEVALIER PODOVY.—Eccentric fashionable suit.

AUDLEY.—Black.

DUST.—Heavy livery.

DUGGINS.—Do.

JENKINS.—Light livery.

MRS. PEACHDOWN.—Fashionable lady's dress.

CASSANDRA.—White muslin.

ROSEMARY.—Modern maid's dress.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*; S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*;

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; C. *Centre*; R. C. *Right of Centre*, L. C. *Left of Centre*.

THE CATSPAW.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A suite of apartments in SNOWBALL'S house.—DUST discovered at table, on which are papers, books, &c.*

Dust. My master's a mean man. This is his private notebook full of all sorts of odds and ends ; and he's writ 'em down in such a kind of gibberish that, for the life of me, I can't make out one of 'em. I call this mean ; yes, mean and—

DUGGINS runs in, R.

Duggins. John, John !

Dust. John ! When a tail has grown to your jacket, and you've ripened into plush, then, Sam Duggins, you may say John. 'Till then, Mr. Dust if you please.

Duggins. Well, then, Mr. Dust, you must run as hard as you can with this paper.—It's for physic.

Dust. Run ! I have lived ten years with Mr. Snowball, and whatever was the hurry, I can lay my hand upon my heart and say, I never run yet.

Duggins. But I tell you, master's ill. Shouldn't wonder, Doctor Petgoose says, if he hasn't broke a blood-vessel.

Dust. Pooh—impossible. 'Tisn't in him. (*Takes a chair.*)

Duggins. Why, you'll never—master may lose his life !

Dust. You've only been a week in this house, Duggins. Not a cat in the parish has lost so many lives as your master, and still has so many to spare.

Duggins. But Doctor Petgoose—

Dust. Doctor Petgoose is a quack.

Duggins. Why, what's a quack ?

Dust. Ha, Duggins ! You're from the country. Well, it's

sweet to meet with the smallest bit of innocence ; it comes upon a town man like new-mown hay.

Duggins. But what is a quack ? Is't a reg'lar trade ?

Dust. No—it's a gift !

Duggins. And Doctor Petgoose you say—

Enter ROSEMARY, R.

Rosemary. This is appalling ! And you can eat your master's bread—yes, Mr. Dust, you can sit in an easy chair, and your master—if I may use the expression—with one leg in the grave.

Dust. Be no more afeared for that. He won't put in the other leg, I can promise you.

Rosem. Mr. Dust, in the nat'r'l course of things, that boy will be a brute quite soon enough without your example.

Dust. Let's hope he may. As for things in their nat'r'l course, I'm the last to hurry 'em. Give me this phvsic-warrant and—and brush my hat, and wait in the hall. [*Exit DUGGINS, L.* Humph ! And Mr. Snowball is so very bad ? What is it this time ?

Rosem. Spasms. And Doctor Petgoose says, as a doctor he won't answer for him.

Dust. As a doctor why should he ? That's the patient's business.

Rosem. Mr. Dust, your ill-nature may be very clever, but I only wished you loved your fellow *speeches*.

Dust. I did once : nobody knows that better than you. Now, I'm above loving anything. I despise the world, and lay by my wages. So he's bad with spasms, is he ? And how it's going to rain ! Why couldn't the doctor make up the physic from his own box ?

Rosem. He hadn't all the drugs.—Specially out of laudanum.

Dust. I don't wonder at that. Folks with the consciences they have in this house must take a good deal to make 'em sleep.

Rosem. Mr. Dust, what you have to say—say straitfor'ard. No zigzag insinuations for me. People, bold in virtue—

Dust. Yes,—people's virtue may be very bold when they've got the military to take care of it.

Rosem. Military !

Dust. What's that soldier after. always rapping his cane

round about the house? Cook says he's after the plate-basket, or after you. Now my opinion is—

Rosem. What is your opinion?

Dust. That he's got an eye upon both.

Rosem. Indeed!

Dust. In which case—but only for the sake of the spoons—I shall tell master.

Rosem. (*Aside.*) Demon! And so hope to double the property Mr. Snowball has left you?

Dust. Left me! Property! Not but what I'm above it, but what is it?

Rosem. When he made his will—yes, I know it—you'll never pass his monument without once a quarter blessing him.

Dust. And is he so very ill now?

Rosem. This time quite in earnest. You don't know it, but an annuity may drop upon you every minute.

Dust. (*Folding up prescription, putting it in his pocket, and resuming his seat.*) I don't know how it is, but I do begin to think better of mankind. Poor master! It's sudden, too. What can have done it?

Rosem. Listen. Lord Wintercough, Mr. Snowball's great uncle, has died—

Dust. I know that.

Rosem. Died in a most unfeeling manner, and never left your master so much as a copper pennypiece. The shock has shivered his system. Mrs. Peachdown comes into the fortune ready made for her like a bed.

Dust. Talking of beds, is my annuity enough for two? Not that I'd have master die to make me comfortable.

Rosem. Ha, Mr. Dust, there's no help for it! He must die, and you must be comfortable.

Dust. If it must be, it doesn't become a worm like me to repine. In which case I'll go for the sufferer's physic. Since if it does him no harm, it can do him no—

Rosem. No good?

Dust. I didn't mean that, but—

Rosem. I'm sure you didn't; but feeling's too much for grammar.

Dust. It is. Poor master! This morning so well and now—spasms! Ha, Rosemary—in this world, what's health?

Rosem. An annuity?

Dust. Or rank—or state? All nothing—all spasms! [Exit, R
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Rosem. Ha ! ha ! ha ! With this flam of an annuity, I'll lead him like a lap-dog after pound-cake. I cajole him ; but how I hate him, he's such a hypocrite ! Still, till I marry Alexander, I must keep terms with the creature. Sweet Apple-face ! he was not made for war's alarms, but for domestic comfort. Not for the trumpet, but the tea-kettle. How very delicious, too, to think that with my little savings, I shall buy his discharge from the Hundred-and-Fourth Foot, dust him from pipe-clay, and make him my own for ever.

[Retires.]

Enter SNOWBALL and DR. PETGOOSE, L.

Snowball. Doctor Petgoose, you must allow me to know my own constitution !

Petgoose. Certainly not. As a doctor, the last liberty I can allow any man.

Snowb. Not know my own feelings ?

Petgoose. No ! it's flying in the face of the faculty.

Snowb. What next ? I suppose I've no eyes—I can't see ?

Petgoose. You have no eyes—you can't see. 'Tis science only that can see. Science, Mr. Snowball, that to the eye of the physician turns the whole human animal, I may say, into glass. At this minute I can see your heart in your bosom—see it as plainly as any cucumber in any bottle.

Snowb. My dear Doctor !

Petgoose. And I must say this.—It's a blessed thing, my friend, you can't see yourself.

Snowb. But I feel like—like a giant.

Petgoose. I know that, and there's the danger. If I could only see you prostrate, I should be comfortable. Your strength is your weakness. Passion is a muscular emotion. For surprise, communicating with the pia-mater, gives morbid activity to the vertebral column. Just as it is the function of the human heart, like the human pocket, to open with expectation, and shut with disappointment. Whereupon, the animal spirits are held in suspense, like—like the bee's-wing in port, or a fragment of hop in old October. In which case, it is ten to one that passion, sweeping up and down the internal anatomy, does not suddenly destroy life, going as clean through the nervous machinery as a house-broom through a cobweb !

Snowb. (*Drops in chair.*) My dear Petgoose !

ROSEMARY coming down, R.

Rosem. You'll kill the best of masters! Oh, I've heard what you said, and I defy the looks of science, even if science does make all the world a glass-house, and all the people in it doctor's-bottles.

Snowb. You're a good girl, Rosemary; but I feel the doctor's right.

Petgoose. No, sir; no. If a physician may say as much to his own face, I'm an ass. For what was my public practice? Were not thousands at my foot?

Rosem. (Aside.) Yes—and thousands under it.

Petgoose. But the friend was stronger than the physician, and I withheld my genius from the rest of the world, to shower it all upon yourself.

Snowb. You did.

Petgoose. And more—my great discovery; the brain of a life—my Paradise Pill! A pill I might have stood upon, like Mercury on the globe. A pill that at the present moment is daily bread to thousands. That pill, in the extravagance of friendship, I parted with for ever and for ever.

Snowb. You did.

Petgoose. More. To make my return to practice impossible, didn't I write an indignant book? Didn't I throw in the face of the world my "Pearls to Pigs?"

Snowb. You did—you did.

Petgoose. And this is my reward! You are to know your constitution—to talk of your feelings?

Snowb. I beg your pardon.

Petgoose. Quite sufficient.

Snowb. I was a fool.

Petgoose. With that I'm always satisfied.

Snowb. Very odd. The agitation's given me quite an appetite. Let's have luncheon. I'm so hungry.

Petgoose. Another delusion. It's your brain that's hungry, not the stomach.

Snowb. Is it?

Petgoose. (Feels SNOWBALL'S pulse.) Well, a cupful of chicken-broth in half-an-hour. And for company, I'll take a mouthful. Rosemary, tell the cook to devil me a nice plump pullet.

Rosem. Oh! broth for the patient and pullet for the Doctor.

Petgoose. I lunch, you see, on classical authority ; for the cock was dedicated to Esculapius. Young woman, as you've heard so much, did you ever hear of Esculapius ? He was the first doctor, and—

Rosem. And lunched off pullets ? Well, if he'd been' the sort of Doctor that's common now, instead of dedicating, as you call it, a pullet—I should have cooked him a duck. [Exit.

Petgoose. (*Aside.*) Some day, I shall prescribe for that young woman.

Snowb. Now hadn't I the best reason for my rage ?

Petgoose. No—you can't afford it. Some day passion will blow you out like a farthing candle. I know your system. Really to enjoy the blessings of life, you should have no more emotion than an oyster.

Snowb. Still, to be tricked by his lordship,—and on his death-bed, too !

Petgoose. Cowardly, but common.

Snowb. I who had followed him,—I was going to say, like a dog.

Petgoose. You may say it.

Snowb. And to leave his money to Mrs. Peachdown,—I feel cold all over when I think of her !

Petgoose. Then you mustn't think of her. I know your system. Think of somebody else.

Snowb. And yet, to have my hopes break like soap-bubbles —to—to—

Petgoose. What ! More passion !

Snowb. I'm tranquil as a toadstool. Still you will allow me to say it is hard ?

Petgoose. Certainly.

Snowb. Perhaps, my dear friend, you will allow me to add—it is damned hard ?

Petgoose. No objection.

Snowb. You may even—

Enter CASSANDRA, R.

What do you want ?

Cassandra. I'm so delighted to see you better !

Snowb. Better !

Cassan. You seem better.

Snowb. Seeming may be lying. Did your looking-glass never tell you that ?

Cassan. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Snowb. (*Aside.*) Will nobody marry her off ? Doctor, this girl's furious spirits kill me. I feel it—my tombstone will be upon her head !

Petgoose. (*To CASSAN.*) Mr. Snowball is better—but weak.

Cassan. Everybody must see his weakness. As I feared—not strong enough to bear a lawyer.

Snowb. Quite strong enough. What lawyer ?

Cassan. Why, sir, Mr. Chumpem.

Snowb. Chumpem ! Ha ! ha ! I see it—a flaw in the will. Ha ! ha ! I see it !

Petgoose. And, unless you're quiet, I see a flaw in the churchyard. Mr. Snowball, if you despise your own life, at least respect my reputation.

Snowb. I'm quiet. Feel my pulse—like a lamb's. (*To CASSAN.*) Show him in.

Cassan. Will it be safe—may the lamb meet the lawyer ?

Petgoose. (*Feeling SNOWBALL's pulse.*) Fluttering, fluttering.

Snowb. No, no. Cool and calm as curds and whey. Upon my honor, I hav'n't a bit of emotion. Upon my word, I feel quite an oyster.

Petgoose. In that case, show the lawyer in.

[*Exit CASSANDRA, c.*

Snowb. Dear Doctor, money can never wholly repay you.

Petgoose. Never. For if I sell the doctor, I present you gratis with the friend.

Enter CASSANDRA with AUDLEY, c.

Cassan. (*Aside to AUDLEY.*) Mind ; first Chancery, then marriage.

Audley. (*Aside.*) Between the two, depend on't his sagacity shall be rarely tested. Mr. Snowball—

Snowb. Why, where's Chumpem ?

Cassan. Mr. Chumpem, sir, is in bed.

Audley. On his back, sir, helpless as a turtle.

Cassan. And as full of gout, sir.

Snowb. Gout ! What do you know of—

Cassan. I know all this gentleman has told me. And fearing you were going to die, and not wishing to interrupt you, I—

Snowb. Quit the room. Doctor, that girl's tongue ! My hair grows white while she talks. Go.

Cassan. Very well, sir—I'll go. I came in tenderness, and I leave in terror. (*To AUDLEY.*) Good sir, break it gently—kindly to him.

Snowb. Go!

Cassan. Don't rumple his feelings with your horrid law; but if it isn't too much to ask, do for once think yourself a zephyr; and—ha! ha! ha!—your client a rose. [*Exit, r.*

Petgoose. Sit down.

Snowb. Let me stand. If it's trouble, I can bear it best upon my legs. (*To AUDLEY.*) Now, sir, in this dreadful crisis, what is Mr. Chumpem's remedy?

Audley. Chancery.

Petgoose. (*Handing chair to SNOWBALL, who sinks into it.*) And yet you will presume upon your little strength!

Audley. Chancery is one remedy, but there is another.

Snowb. (*Rising.*) Another! Chancery is one, you say, and—and—

Audley. Marriage is the other.

Snowb. Well, I am weak. (*Falls in chair.*) Marriage the other!

Audley. Throw the matter into Chancery, and in time you may set the will aside.

Snowb. But how, if before, time sets me aside?

Audley. That's it. Whereas marriage stops all anxiety, for you know the worst at once.

Snowb. Chancery! Doctor, I should die in no time.

Petgoose. Chancery! Gasp and die, like a gudgeon on a hook.

Snowb. And how—how about marriage?

Petgoose. Why, in the matter of marriage, while there's life there's hope.

Snowb. True. In all the wedding-cake, hope is the sweetest of the plums. And who is it I'm to marry?

Audley. Why, the widow,—Mrs. Peachdown, of course.

Snowb. Marry her! I'd rather be gnawed to death by law, and buried in a winding-sheet of parchment.

Audley. If you so decide, sir, I've no doubt our house can accommodate you. Still, if at a blow you made the defendant your wife,—

Snowb. Well?

Audley. 'Twould save time and money.

Snowb. And time makes life, and money gilds it! No—no! I'd rather fling myself upon the law.

Audley. Very good. Then we at once throw Mrs. Peachdown into Chancery?

Snowb. Stop. Throw her tenderly—amicably. Because—ha! ha!—I am so shrewd—if Chancery is going against us, we can but relent and marry the poor thing at last. But that's like me. So deep; eh, eh, Doctor?

Petgoose. Don't ask me. If you will tamper with your constitution, you must bear the penalty.

Audley. Then Mrs. Peachdown must understand that the suit is quite a friendly one?

Snowb. Only animated by the warmest friendship.

Audley. No vindictive feeling?

Snowb. No more than if the suit between us was a game at chess.

Audley. With this advantage. When you find you're losing, you can make it all right by playing a bishop. Upon my life, sir, you are wondrous shrewd. A client Mr. Chumpem must be proud of.

Snowb. Shrewd! I believe so. At school, they called me the fox—the little fox. Would you think it?

Audley. I should not. (*Aside.*) I should rather think you the other party.

Snowb. But not a word to Mrs. Peachdown. With her chivalrous notions, her love of the middle ages, she might arm her resentment in a suit of plate-armor, and dare me herself to single combat. So the widow must be lulled.

Audley. Sir, she shall be the Sleeping Beauty of the Court of Chancery.

Snowb. Capital. By the way, I'm sorry to hear Chumpem's so bad, but you understand my wishes?

Audley. Perfectly. Ha, sir! Mr. Chumpem's a great sufferer.

Snowb. Poor fellow! he's a sharp man and a dear lawyer—I mean—you know what I mean. Good bye. You'll serve the widow at once, but don't alarm her.

Audley. For your sake, sir, I'll make law like love. The lady sha'n't dream of her loss, till she's called upon for costs.

[*Exit, c.*

Snowb. Mark my words. That young man will become one of the ornaments of his profession.

Petgoose. One of those ornaments that—more's the pity—are seldom properly framed.

Enter DUGGINS, c. gives letter to SNOWBALL.

What have I said? Yet you will attend to business?

Snowb. But this mayn't be business?

Petgoose. Pooh! It's a letter for money. I've seen so many cases I know the internal complaint at a glance.

Snowb. There. Read. (*Gives letter.*)

Petgoose. (*Reading.*) "Honored Sir,"—I said so. Do you think you're honored for nothing? "Honored Sir, the death of the sainted Lord Wintercough has left me without a friend. But his lordship was too good for this world, as I feel I'm not good enough." Humph! That strikes the balance.

Snowb. Go on.

Petgoose. (*Reading.*) "Nevertheless, I throw myself with a confiding heart upon you"—

Snowb. Confiding heart! Is it a woman?

Duggins. Not in the least, sir.

Petgoose (*Reading.*) "An interview is all I ask, when I pledge myself to give you"—

Snowb. What?

Petgoose. (*Reading.*) "My name in full. Meanwhile, I remain in the instalment of an initial, yours till death, C."

Snowb. Very odd. What do you think?

Petgoose. Pooh! A begging-letter writer. One of the impostors who live on pen and ink, with the further advantage of never printing what they scribble.

Snowb. Think so?

Petgoose. Certain. One of the wretches who not only pillage compassionate people, but what is more atrocious—defraud the critics.

Snowb. You're wrong. Duggins, show him in. (*Exit DUGGINS.*) Yes, I'm sure you're wrong. I prophesy a discovery here, and I never was deceived yet. Mark my words, there's something in this.

Petgoose. Pshaw! Some rascal that lives on simpletons and gulls. (*Looking at watch.*) They're taking their time with this pullet. They're—

Enter COOLCARD hurriedly c; he runs and embraces SNOWBALL.

Coolcard. My dear, dear sir!

Snowb. Hollo! Doctor! What!—

Coolc. Pardon me—my feelings! I had forgotten. We both have lost a friend, and the tears of sorrow wash out all distinctions. Oh, sir! our Wintercough is gone.

Petgoose. Ha! Why weren't you with him when he went?

Coolc. I was then in—in the Low Countries on an errand, but of that anon. His lordship was not himself at last, or I had not been forgotten. But there is one comfort, you are worthy of his princely wealth.

Snowb. I wish his lordship had thought so.

Coolc. What? Why? How?

Petgoose. Then you don't know that Mrs. Peachdown inherits?

Coolc. Aye, but that will was revoked.

Snowb. Ha! ha! To be sure! There was another?

Coolc. Has it not been found?

Snowb. Not yet—but it must be. For, of course you know there is one?

Coolc. The oaken cabinet—that carved with Diana and the Stag—has that been searched?

Snowb. No—no! I dare say not.

Coolc. Then rest you satisfied—you are his lordship's heir.

Petgoose. Pray—how did you first know Lord Wintercough?

Coolc. That is a long story. I was then a rich man—I am now a poor one. Yes, sir, a poor one, and do not blush to own it.

Petgoose. More shame for you. For as I observe in my "Pearls to Pigs"—you've met the book?

Coolc. Not yet.

Petgoose. You will. As I observe,—"Not to blush for poverty is to want a proper respect for wealth."

Snowb. What may be your name, sir?

Coolc. Coolcard. Did you never heard his lordship speak of Coolcard—Augustus Coolcard?

Snowb. Never.

Coolc. Well, sir, I am that man. I've a thousand of his lordship's letters will satisfy you. We first met—met romantically—years ago. In Italy—at the Baths of Caracalla. One lovely night—an Italian night! The moon hung like a golden salver in the dark blue sky, when were seen two men of sinister aspect, muffled in umbrageous cloaks that—

Enter DUST, with tray, chicken, wine—soup—medicine, R.

I beg your pardon. (*Aside to SNOWBALL.*) In confidence, I am not ashamed to say that I am a little faint.

Snowb. To be sure. Mr. Coolcard, you'll take a snack with the doctor.

Petgoose. (*Aside to SNOWBALL.*) Don't press him—I'd rather not.

Snowb. Why not? I can't be deceived; and at least, he has the outside of a gentleman.

Petgoose. Possibly; but with one pullet 'twixt two, the outside is not the question. (*COOLCARD has seated himself at table.*) Why he's down already.

Coolc. (*Carving.*) I am not ashamed to confess it, I am very, very hungry.

Petgoose. (*Aside.*) He'll cheat the very dog of his bones.

(DUST brings soup and medicine to SNOWBALL.)

Stop. (*Feels SNOWBALL's pulse*) Yes, you are better—much better.

Dust. (*Aside.*) Oh yes—my old luck!

Snowb. I felt so.

Petgoose. So, for your medicine we'll wait a little. Yes—you shall have the chicken.

Snowb. Shall I?

Petgoose. You shall, and I'll put up with the broth. (*Takes broth and seats himself.* SNOWBALL stares at COOLCARD voraciously feeding.) What's the matter? Your friend has the outside of a gentleman.

Snowb. Yes—but the inside of a coalheaver.

[*Sits staring at COOLCARD, who eats and drinks.* PETGOOSE takes his broth. DUST waits at back.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*As before. CASSANDRA and ROSEMARY discovered.*

Rosem. Well, to be sure ! To think that Mr. Audley—above all people—should be your lover ?

Cassan. You'll not betray my confidence ?

Rosem. Certainly not, ma'am ; (*Aside*) as if I didn't know all about it before. And this Chancery suit is all a pretence ? No real law after all ?

Cassan. None whatever. Only to test the truth of Mrs. Peachdown's suitor.

Rosem. Nothing but right ; with a second husband a woman can't be too particular. However, Miss, let's hope he'll come out of the trial like a new guinea out of the furnace. And now as you've told me all about Mrs. Peachdown's lover and your own into the bargain, as a recompense I'll tell you all about mine.

Cassan. You a lover !

Rosem. Why not ? Thank goodness ! love's like the flies ; and—drawing-room or garrets—goes all over a house.

Cassan. Still, it's curious.

Rosem. Don't see it, ma'am. No curiosity about me. Flesh and blood, ma'am, same as my neighbours.

Cassan. Any way I'm charmed to hear it. And what is your swain ?

Rosem. A bulwark of our native isle—a soldier.

Cassan. A soldier ! Stranger still. And how did he win you ?

Rosem. I couldn't help it—all at once ; he did look so much like a gentleman when he stood at ease.

Cassan. Ha ! ha ! And you'll become a soldier's wife !

Rosem. Oh no ! I'm going to buy him out of the cannon's mouth. And soon, too. I've already bought him a black coat and waistcoat, and what he calls his civil garments. For he was very genteel, before trouble drove him to glory. I'm going to ask you something. Should you like to see him ?

Cassan. 'Twould be delightful—but, I suppose, not possible.

Rosem. He's in that room. Got him like a tame rabbit.

Cassan. In that room!

Rosem. Now I don't mind telling you. He's long had the run of the house. Bless you! knows the pattern of every dish, and the cut of every decanter in it.

Cassan. Indeed? And you feel sure of this soldier's heart?

Rosem. Every pin's point of it.

Cassan. I fear you only share it with the dishes and decanters.

Rosem. Don't say so—I should dissolve with the idea. Only just to please me, examine his affections.

Cassan. Willingly. (*Aside.*) Here's sport.

Rosem. Tap as if with a drum-stick at that door. He'll unlock it.—And when you look into his eyes, and drink up his voice, won't you envy me! Stay—I'll tap myself; for how should you know the true movement? (*Taps at the door measuredly, as upon a drum.* *Door is opened.*)

*ROSEMARY runs off as APPLEFACE, in drummer's uniform, comes out, L.

Appleface. What! An ambush!

Cassan. Don't be alarmed. Rosemary has told me all. I had my fears for the poor girl—they are gone. I now perceive, she is a happy woman.

Applef. Couldn't be otherwise with the Hundred-and-Fourth. Our regiment's made more happy women than any in the line.

Cassan. I must take care of Rosemary. Your intentions, then, are honourable?

Applef. Not at present.

Cassan. What?

Applef. Can't afford to be honourable 'till I'm bought out.

Cassan. I understand—when you are free. 'Twould seem, then, the army is not your choice?

Applef. Never was. I took it as a forlorn hope; and I will say this of it—I hav'n't been disappointed.

Cassan. Pray what made you enlist?

Applef. All come of my weak habit. I was a lawyer's clerk, and made a joke. Whereupon my master turned me off. He said law was so big a thing, no man with any other stuff in his head had room for it. So I listed, and being like a nightingale, small and musical, they made me a drummer.

Cassan. Left the law and became a drummer !

Applef. Yes, ma'am. 'Twas only a move from one parchment to t'other ; and which of the two makes the most row in this world, nobody can tell.

Cassan. Well, assured of such a wife as Rosemary, you now feel your good-fortune ?

Applef. Pretty well—for the Hundred-and-Fourth looks high. Last week our cymbal-player married three hundred a year. To be sure, he was black, and some people don't mind paying for colour.

Cassan. But then consider Rosemary's mind, to say nothing of her beauty !

Applef. As for beauty, she may go yellow like a November leaf, but this heart will always be as it was.

Cassan. I'm wholly satisfied. Because, beauty will fade—the loveliest form become a wreck.

Applef. Don't you fear. Let her be as great a wreck as she will, I shall never be the man to take to a jolly-boat and leave her.

Enter ROSEMARY, R.

Rosem. Oh, Miss ! Here's Mrs. Peachdown in such a rage. I don't know what she means, but she says she's come to beard a lion.

Applef. A woman in a rage ! Then the lion will have the worst of it. I'll beat a retreat.

Rosem. Impossible ! Leave the house in your uniform !

Applef. Pulses of my heart, where's the black ? In a difficulty I'm not above a change.

Rosem. Go back—go ! Alexander, think of my reputation, and fly.

Applef. Alexander thinks of it as his own and flies accordingly. [Runs into apartment in the scene.]

Cassan. The dear daring creature ! 'Tis so like her—I knew she'd come. In five minutes, Mr. Snowball—

Rosem. Why here he is, come up the back-stairs, and the Doctor with him.

Cassan. The Doctor with him ! He's to meet the widow, and provides for the danger. Let's leave 'em the field. [Exit.]

Rosem. Certainly—leave 'em the field ; but not till I've secured my wounded. (Takes the key from the inside. Locks the door L., and exit R.)

Enter SNOWBALL and PETGOOSE, c.

Snowb. Was ever the like? Plunge a woman into Chancery, and even then she comes up against you. What could have brought the widow here?

Petgoose. Why, it's plain—plain as a pestle. Despair.

Snowb. D'ye think so? You make me very happy.

Petgoose. She feels she is lost, and comes to fascinate you.

Snowb. As well fascinate the rock of Gibraltar. No; if I'm proud of anything, it's of my strength against woman. I'll see the widow at my foot, and still stand like a pillar.

Petgoose. A proud position; for she's so desperate, even a parson won't stop her. The tender passion—

Snowb. The tender passion! Ha! ha! Thus I fold my arms, and set my teeth against it. I'll strain every sinew into iron—every muscle into adamant—

Petgoose. Iron and adamant! Pooh-pooh. I deal with mortal flesh. Talk in that way, and you'd better call in a blacksmith. Humph! You're not well. Pulse, wiry—(*feeling pulse*)—wiry as a rat-trap. How many pills of Paradise—upon your honour—how many last night?

Snowb. Eight.

Petgoose. Eight! I said a dozen. Suppose you now swallow the other four—suppose—

Enter MRS. PEACHDOWN and CASSANDRA, R.

Snowb. (*Aside to him.*) Too late—I must first swallow the widow.—She looks in Chancery. Madam, this visit is as surprising as delightful. Quite.

Mrs. Peachdown. (*Affecting to suppress her passion.*) I thought it best to come. Yes, said I—I will myself negotiate a peace. Dear Mr. Snowball, will you accept the olive?

Snowb. Why, olives are very well, but I don't see how they're to be taken with law.

Mrs. Peachd. Speak of law again, and I shall drop. At the very name of law, I feel thrice a woman's weakness.

Petgoose. (*Aside.*) Then she's invincible.

Snowb. (*Aside to PETGOOSE.*) Doctor?

Petgoose. (*Aside to him.*) Mind what you're about. Every time she makes up her mouth, I seem to see a wedding-ring.

Cassan. And now I'll leave you. Doctor, they have no need of witnesses?

Petg. Certainly not.

Snowb. No—no; don't go. If we're to plant the olive, stay and witness the ceremony.

Cassan. By no means—we should only embarrass. (*Aside to Mrs. PEACHDOWN.*) Depend upon it, the surest way to crush the creature is, ha! ha! to marry him.

Petgoose. (Aside to SNOWBALL.) Be quiet—talk little, and—I'm at hand—call if there's danger. (*Aside.*) A fine woman—with a mellow look of money—too good for him.

Cassan. Doctor,—

Petgoose. I attend you. (*Aside.*) And she'll succeed in her suit—no doubt. And success is charming. Yes, I was always a friend—a great friend to success. Madam.

[Leads off CASSANDRA.

Mrs. Peachd. (*With sudden animation.*) And now, my dear Mr. Snowball! Why, what's the matter?

Snowb. Madam, I'll be frank. Your tenderness alarms me. I shall sink under it. A soft atmosphere kills me. So if you please—(*aside*)—better stop this at once—let our conversation be brisk and bracing.

Mrs. Peachd. With all my heart! I prefer a keen air myself. It best suits my blood, my spirits. But I thought you delicate.

Snowb. Oh no—not more delicate than becomes a gentleman. Don't spare me.

Mrs. Peachd. To business, then. You dispute his Lordship's will?

Snowb. Such is my misfortune. (*Aside.*) Though the story of that scoundrel Coolcard, Augustus Coolcard—and I was never before deceived—never—is a flam—all a flam. I do.

Mrs. Peachd. And disputing, throw me, an unprotected widow, into Chancery.

Snowb. As for your widowhood, I feel for the man who has lost you. Venerable Mr. Peachdown! Good old gentleman!

Mrs. Peachd. The conversation grows oppressive. A little more brisk and bracing if you please.

Snowb. Let's return to Chancery. My heart bled to put you there. And the heart, the heart, Mrs. Peachdown, never bleeds more than—than—(*Aside*)—than when the pocket bleeds with it.

Mrs. Peachd. Oh, I don't upbraid you. I was myself sur-

prised by the will—'twas so chivalrous. Nevertheless, in these metallic times—in this wretched age of arithmetic—'tis your duty to deprive me of every shilling.

Snowb. How noble of you to think so! It is my duty.

Mrs. Peachd. And mine, not to let go a single sixpence.

Snowb. Eh? What? Oh, very well. Yes, that's the fight—that's the struggle. But then we fight as friends?

Mrs. Peachd. And struggle with the best intentions. I'm told, too, our suit may last twenty years.

Snowb. Twenty? Fifty.

Mrs. Peachd. Then there's my hand. Nay; if we're to fight for fifty years, at least shake hands before the fight begins.

(*Offers her hand.*)

Snowb. Certainly—only right. (*Aside.*) Now, who'd think there was any danger in such a hand? Yet how often, like a trap, it closes upon an innocent man, and makes him a prisoner for his natural life!

Mrs. Peachd. Yes—you will shake hands. (*He timidly takes her hand—she continues to hold it.*) Now we are friends, and law will be a pleasure. Now I feel I've an employment in life. We'll watch the vicissitudes of the suit together—watch and moralize. Now, poverty may menace you—now myself—

Snowb. Charming!

Mrs. Peachd. And now, it may be, threaten both together.

Snowb. Delicious!

Mrs. Peachd. As I say, we'll moralize. And when ruin—

Snowb. (*Aside.*) I wish she'd drop my hand. Her words go creeping up my arm, and spreading all over my shoulder.

Mrs. Peachd. Where was I?—

Snowb. At ruin.

Mrs. Peachd. True. And—

Snowb. And—(*taking away his hand*)—there I think we'd better stop.

Mrs. Peachd. Not at all. At ruin begins devotion. Friendship having done its worst, we're bound to one another for ever.

Snowb. Then we'll begin by throwing friendship overboard, and go to law with all our hearts and all our claws.

Mrs. Peachd. What! you reject the olive?

Snowb. Olive! Fiddlededee! it won't grow upon sheepskin.

Mrs. Peachd. Oh, very well! Then war to the last farthing.

Snowb. Nothing but war, with as much horse-hair as we can put into it.

Mrs. Peachd. I'm glad of this. I now feel the heroism of my nature, and will sacrifice you with laughter. Miserable victim!

Snowb. Mrs. Peachdown!

Mrs. Peachd. Devoted, doomed one! You have turned every drop of mercy here to ink—Japan ink. You thought to trade on my timidity—you believed me a weak woman!

Snowb. I didn't.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Violently.*) You did!

Snowb. I see my mistake, and beg your pardon.

Mrs. Peachd. I entered this house a dove—I will say it, a very dove.

Snowb. (*Aside.*) Ecod, you've moulted since, and got very different feathers.

Mrs. Peachd. But even the turtle will peck the hand that—no, sir, I will *not* weep.

Snowb. Thank you, ma'am, for all favours.

Mrs. Peachd. For I know that woman's tears are the coward's cordial.

Snowb. Coward! What do you mean, ma'am?

Mrs. Peachd. Sir, I'll not be insulted. I say, sir—

Enter ROSEMARY, R.

Rosem. Anybody call? Oh, ma'am, what's the matter?

Mrs. Peachd. I only wish my lawyer was come!

Rosem. Your lawyer? (*Aside.*) Here's a bit of luck! He is come, ma'am.

Mrs. Peachd. Is he?

Rosem. Yes, ma'am, come—I showed him into that room. (*Aside.*) This way I can get him out in his new black. (*Aloud.*) He left his bag down stairs; and, now I remember—I'm to take it him. [*Exit, c.*]

Snowb. I don't understand this. People brought into my house!

Mrs. Peachd. What! Deny me every comfort? Throw me into Chancery, and then refuse the melancholy satisfaction of a lawyer?

Re-enter ROSEMARY, carrying lawyer's bag, c.

Rosem. Here's Mr. Boggle's papers, ma'am. (*Aside to her.*) Only own him for your lawyer and he'll beat the best—(*aside*)

and—with what's in this bag—the blackest of 'em. (*Goes to door, l. s. e. Unlocks it.*) Mr. Boggle, I've brought up your papers. When you've gone over 'em and—(*aside*)—and they've gone over you,—Mrs. Peachdown, your client, wants to see you. (*Throws bag into the room.*)

Mrs. Peachd. You saw that bag? You know not its contents! (*Aside.*) I'm sure I don't.

Snowb. (*Aside.*) New documents! More deeds!

Mrs. Peachd. I was prepared to sacrifice 'em on the altar of friendship.

Rosem. (*Aside.*) And I have offered 'em on the altar of love.

Snowb. (*Aside.*) I'm wrong. She's a romantic fool, and after all, to be wheedled. My dear madam,—

Mrs. Peachd. No, sir—no. You have hurt my woman's pride, and possibly you may have heard of a wounded lioness.

Snowb. I wouldn't hurt a lamb; specially if the lamb was a lady.

Mrs. Peachd. I confessed my weakness, and you despised it.

Snowb. Quite otherwise. I'm charmed with it.

Mrs. Peachd. I showed you my heart even as—as a looking-glass.

Snowb. You did; and I was delighted with what I saw there.

Mrs. Peachd. I wish I could think so!

Snowb. Why not? What can't a woman think, if she's only resolute?

Mrs. Peachd. This is too much. Hope and fear, and fear and hope! Much too much. (*Affects violent emotion, laughing hysterically.*) Oh, you've made me so happy!

Rosem. A fit—a fit of happiness. Help! help!

Enter CASSANDRA and PETGOOSE, c.

Cassan. What have you done, sir?

Snowb. Nothing. Very odd; can't make a woman happy, but she goes into a fit.

Petgoose. (*Aside to SNOWBALL.*) Oh—I see. Nothing.

Mrs. Peachd. I could have borne up against oppression, but his magnanimity is too much.

Rosem. Quite melting.

Mrs. Peachd. Noble creature! Paragon of bachelors!

Petgoose. (To SNOWBALL.) What have you been about?

Mrs. Peachd. He has withdrawn his suit—

Snowb. What,—I?

Mrs. Peachd. And I feel a bird escaped from the net—a kid from the wolf.—a mouse from the cat.

Snowb. (Aside to PETGOOSE.) Not a word of it true—she's in Chancery still.

Mrs. Peachd. I knew it. I had but to find his generous heart—touch it—and—

Snowb. (Violently.) But you hav'n't found it—you hav'n't touched it—and more than that, never will, ma'am! Never will!

Petgoose. Are you mad? Your heart, indeed! Mr. Snowball, do you court dissolution?

Snowb. (Aside to him.) Anything but court the widow. She's brought her lawyer and I'm stone again. Stone!

Petgoose. Stone! Sand—sand for death's hour-glass. Be quiet, or you hav'n't twenty minutes to run. (Commandingly.) Tranquil! An oyster, if you please! An oyster!

Snowb. I'm getting to it—indeed, I am.

Petgoose. (To MRS. PEACHD.) Mr. Snowball has an infirmity that—who has not? You, I understand, have an attorney who—

Rosem. Oh yes! (Runs and opens door L. S. E.) Mr. Boggle, Mr. Boggle, if you please.

Enter APPLEFACE, dressed in black, carrying bag, c.

Applef. Here I am. (Aside.) 'Spose it's all right: but the respectability's so sudden, it has nearly knocked me down.

Rosem. (Aside.) Well, if they don't fit him, as if he'd been born for 'em!

Snowb. (Aside to PETGOOSE.) He looks a fool.

Petgoose. (Aside to SNOWBALL.) He may have his reasons for that, and be a greater rogue accordingly.

Mrs. Peachd. (To APPLEFACE.) Mr. Boggle, I've changed my mind—so you'll keep the documents there, safe.

Applef. Safe. (Aside.) Documents! Yes,—drummer's uniform. Sheepskin deeds.

Mrs. Peachd. Mr. Boggle, you know I never wished to make enemies.

Applef. My own motto, ma'am. Why make enemies, when you're lucky if you don't find 'em ready made?

Mrs. Peachd. Still, I must protect myself.

Applelef. A kitten, if she could speak, could say no less.

Mrs. Peachd. Therefore, I say—treasure the contents of that bag. They may make oppression tremble yet.

Applelef. They may. (*Aside.*) But somebody else must carry 'em.

Enter SERVANT, c. *Gives letter to SNOWBALL.*

Servant. Waiting an answer, sir. A friend, sir—he says—a dear friend of the late Lord Wintercough. Said something, too, about life and death.

Snowb. Life and death! It's in your way. (*Gives letter to PETGOOSE.*) Open it.

Petgoose. Why, it's Latin.

Snowb. Latin! I'd a lot of it once, but I've mislaid it all somewhere.

Petgoose. (*To APPLEFACE.*) Of course, as an attorney, you know Latin?

Applelef. Of course—as an attorney. (*Aside.*) I see, you don't. Go on; we'll make it out between us.

Petgoose. Between us! (*Reads.*) "Salutem."

Applelef. Much as to say—"I salute you."

Petgoose. (*Reads.*) "Infelix harum scriptor—"

Applelef. "I was a harum scarum fellow—"

Petgoose. (*Reads.*) "Olim societate nomen habebat."

Applelef. "No man inhabiting better society."

Petgoose. (*Reads.*) "Nunc—"

Applelef. "My uncle—"

Snowb. What?

Applelef. All right; *nunc* is short for uncle.

Petgoose. (*Aside to SNOWBALL.*) His impudence is miraculous; but we'll go on. (*Reads.*) "Nunc autem annosus"—

Applelef. "My uncle last autumn—"

Petgoose. (*Reads.*) "Imā inopiā obrutus—"

Applelef. "Lost a fortune in opium—"

Petgoose. (*Reads.*) "Sine amico, sine ré, male vestitus—"

Applelef. Why, that is—(*Taking letter from PETGOOSE.*) I can pick it out better alone. (*Affecting surprise as he reads.*) Well, I bless my stars, I'm an honest man!

Snowb. Are you sure?

Applelef. Otherwise, what a temptation! (*Half aside to MRS.*

PEACHDOWN.) As your attorney, what's here doesn't leave us the spectre of a hope. Therefore, as your attorney, I feel it my duty to destroy the evidence.

[*Tears the letter to pieces, and throws them about.*

Snowb. Scoundrel!

Applef. Remember,—you're talking damages.

Petgoose. Answer me, sir. Wherefore destroy that letter?

Applef. Wherefore? Self-defence is the clearest of all laws; and for this reason—the lawyers didn't make it. As for the letter, you can impound the pieces. Sir, you have trampled on this lady, my generous client, and as a gentleman who knows the extent of his profession, I'll stick at nothing.

Snowb. Oh, ho! That's it. (*Aside to Servant.*) Show up, instantly, the man who brought the letter.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside to Rosem.*) What a treasure of a creature!

Rosem. A treasure indeed! (*aside*) if she knew all.

Applef. We came prepared to give you everything.

Mrs. Peachd. Everything.

Applef. And now, we won't give you even quarter.

Coolcard, as Busby Knox, is shown in, c.

Snowb. Now, sir, you sent a letter—you—

Petgoose. Will you leave him to me? You're name is—

Coolc. Busby Knox, M.A.

Petgoose. There, sir, is your letter. (*Pointing to pieces.*)

Coolc. Alas! even so the heart of genius—the feelings of the scholar—are torn and trampled on by the golden vulgar!

Snowb. No—not at all. Mr. Busby Knox, as for your uncle and his losses in opium, I'm sorry. And you being a scholar, it seems—

Coolc. I wrote—sweet Alma Mater—in my mother tongue, to prove myself. And behold! Thus is the scholar outraged! Who—who is the man with the no heart to have done this?

Snowb. You shall be satisfied. I believe every syllable. But to business. You knew Lord Wintercough?

Coolc. Knew him! he was the scholar's friend. At College, I wrote for him his prize poem, and he rewarded me—forgive this burst of feeling—with ready money, ready money, sir.

Petgoose. (*Aside.*) Cries at ready money. Very suspicious, that.

Snowb. (*Aside.*) But I'll be cautious here. Not tricked twice. Pray, Mr. Busby Knox, did you know one Coolcard? What's the matter?

Coolc. Coolcard! The viper!

Petgoose. (*Aside to SNOWBALL.*) And yet you will go about wrapping up vipers in five pound notes!

Coolc. Coolcard! I trust I'm a man of gentleness—I hope letters have not been lost upon me. Yes. *Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros!* I wouldn't hurt a wasp—not even a wasp. But Coolcard—Augustus Coolcard! Wherever I meet him, I shall feel myself a wretch indeed, if I don't break every villainous bone in his insufferable skin.

Snowb. He said he was in the confidence of Lord Wintercough.

Coolc. He was, and he betrayed it. When I think of his baseness, when I know much that, in private, it is fit you know—

Mrs. Peachd. We'll no longer intrude. Adieu, Mr. Snowball. You've rejected peace, and now—take care of the documents, Mr. Boggle—now, war to the death.

Snowb. War! My flag's a black one.

Applef. Ours black and white. So a fig for costs, and war to the workhouse.

Petgoose. This must not be. This is uncivil—savage. Fitter for Cherokees than—

Rosem. 'Tisn't for me to speak, but so it is, doctor.

Petgoose. Why not go to law politely—pleasantly? Why not make the cause an agreeable exercise of the superior felings?

Snowb. (*Aside.*) I see his drift; very politic. Mrs. Peachdown, will you take my hand?

Applef. (*Interposing.*) Stop. It's without prejudice?

Snowb. Without prejudice.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Shaking hands, and curtseying.*) Without prejudice.

Rosem. This is beautiful. Not going to law, and ruining one another like Hottentots, but Christians.

Petgoose. (*To MRS. PEACHDOWN.*) Allow me, for my friend, to see you to the door. (*Aside.*) I won't leave her yet. This way—

(PETGOOSE gives his arm to MRS. PEACHDOWN. CASSANDRA takes the arm of APPLEFACE. APPLEFACE and COOLCARD bow formally to each other. Bowing and curtseying on either side as they exeunt.)

Snowb. (To COOLCARD.) In this room, my dear sir—in this room. [Shows COOLCARD into inner room.

Rosem. (Manet.) Well, I'm sure! In my own black, and takes no more notice of me than—I begin to have horrid doubts. Like 'em all, I'm afraid he's a wretch, but then he does look so much like a gentleman! [Exit.

END OF ACT II.

A C T III.

SCENE I.—Suite of Apartments in MRS. PEACHDOWN'S House.

CAPTAIN BURGONET and AUDLEY, shown in by SERVANT, c.

Burgonet. Mrs. Peachdown gone out?

Serv. Yes, Captain.

Burgon. Very well—I'll wait.

Audley. And so will I. [Exit Servant.] Out or at home, she's the strangest lady.

Burgon. There's the bitter and the sweet of it. Heigho! Once I thought myself parson-proof; and here I am, liable at any moment to be blown into married blessedness.

Audley. Then why not conquer the weakness?

Burgon. Gratitude won't let me—it gives me so much plaguy pleasure. But for this sudden wealth, we might have been married already.

Audley. I see—with change of fortune comes change of mind. 'Tis like the world.

Burgon. But not like my Harriet. She's as high above the world, aye, as a skylark when it sings the loudest.

Audley. Hallo, Captain! You're become quite a poet.

Burgon. Not so bad as that, I hope. But this suit, Mr. Audley, it may last, you say—

Audley. Why, I see a compromise, and come about it.

Burgon. Compromise! Let her give up every penny.

Audley. And you would throw away this fortune?

Burgon. Why, I'd rather have it; still 'twould convince her of my devotion. You see, she's all for the middle ages.

Audley. And what she calls the good, extinct old virtues.

Burgon. Some of 'em like extinct volcanoes, with a strong memory of fire and brimstone. Why with her, the world as it is, is a second-hand world—a world all the worse for wear. The sun itself isn't the same sun that illuminated the darling middle ages; but a twinkling end of sun—the sun upon a save-all. And the moon—the moon that shone on Coeur-de-Lion's battle-axe—ha! that was a moon. Now our moon at the brightest, what is it? A dim, dull, counterfeit moon—a pewter shilling. All vast folly, and yet very delicious when she talks it.

Audley. Yes. With a man in love 'tisn't the words but the lips. Now, when you're married—

Burgon. I shall leave the service, and—

Audley. Leave the service! The gallant Hundred-and-Fourth will soon be a skeleton.

Burgon. The Hundred-and-Fourth has suffered by marriage of late; but what more?

Audley. I am concerned for a spinster to purchase her a husband out of your regiment. She's saved the money for her bargain, and I only wait an answer from head-quarters to—

Enter MRS. PEACHDOWN, c.

Mrs. Peachdown. Pardon me, Mr. Audley. I've been detained on my way—detained to look at my Stonehenge.

Audley. Stonehenge, madam!

Mrs. Peachd. Yes, such a model—made into a work-table.

Burgon. Stonehenge a work-table! We shall next have St. Paul's a money-box.

Mrs. Peachd. Gramercy, Captain Burgonet! Your worship's well, I trow?

Burgon. By my fackins, lady,—well as a poor man may be, who did not die four hundred years ago.

Mrs. Peachd. By the mass, a grievous pity—you'd been mightily improved by this.

Audley. And Stonehenge, madam ?

Mrs. Peachd. Such a success ! Yet mark the envy of small minds. I no sooner come out with Stonehenge as a work-table, than that horrid Lady Mummypit starts the Sphinx as a what-not.

Burgon. Thus is genius scandalized by imitation. But take comfort, madam, nature herself—whom you must admire, she's so old—nature meant it from the beginning. Nature made man, and then she made the monkeys.

Mrs. Peachd. Apropos, have you heard of Lord Fossil ? Next week, he launches such a phaeton ! The model of the war-chariot of Caractacus, with liveries—

Burgon. After the manner, doubtless, of the ancient Britons. With the genius his Lordship has for going backwards, we may yet see him lodging in a cave, and boarding upon acorns.

Mrs. Peachd. Picturesque creature ! he's quite equal to it.

Audley. And now, madam—

Mrs. Peachd. And now. This horrid suit ! Why did I live in this drowsy, afternoon time of the world ? Why not in the roseate dawn of chivalry, when my own true knight—knights might be had for love, and not for money then—would have carried off my cause upon his lance, and me upon his palfrey afterwards !

Audley. But as the Chancellor won't fight, and as Mr. Snowball—

Mrs. Peachd. Mr. Snowball ! Well, if things come to the worst, I shall mend them with a husband.

Burgon. Mend them ?

Mrs. Peachd. Mend them—patch them—what you will ?

Audley. (Aside.) Have a care, madam ; the Captain's desperate, and despite of Chancery, will marry you without a shilling. I come from Mr. Snowball, and—

Burgon. Pardon me, I am come. And, madam, as I had first possession of the knocker, perhaps, in justice, I may ask first hearing ?

Mrs. Peachd. What's justice to the picturesque ? As Lord Fossil says, justice, reading, and writing have vulgarised mankind. Still, we must make the best of evil days ; so, Captain, you shall have justice. (*To AUDLEY.*) We shall not be five minutes.

Burgon. Say seven, and you shall hold the watch.

Audley. Take your time, madam—we never fail to charge it.

Mrs. Peachd. And now, Captain Burgonet, what do you want?

Burgon. Your simplicity's encouraging. Mrs. Peachdown, I want you.

Mrs. Peachd. Ha ! ha ! ha ! The fox wanted the grapes.

Burgon. That fox was a fool. Had he only waited, they'd have fallen into his mouth.

Mrs. Peachd. Do you sit up of nights to study compliments for women?

Burgon. Quite otherwise ; they come in my sleep, when I've nothing better to do.

Mrs. Peachd. Poor clayey creature ! Would Sir Philip Sydney have said a thing like that ? But the whole race is degenerate.

Burgon. The whole—men and women. Ha ! why didn't I live in the time of your great-grandmother ?

Mrs. Peachd. I wish you had, I'm sure.

Burgon. Women were women then. But women, now ! Less of heaven and more of earth. Still, from you I can imagine what your great-grandmother must have been.

Mrs. Peachd. You can ?

Burgon. Can manage to make her out, as one guesses at departed perfection from a very weak and somewhat faded copy.

Mrs. Peachd. Ha ! ha ! Excellent. And perhaps you wish I had really been my great-grandmother ?

Burgon. To please you, I'll wish further back. I'll wish you had lived maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth, and—

Mrs. Peachd. And what, sir ?

Burgon. And died so ?

Mrs. Peachd. Ha ! ha ! ha ! (*Aside.*) But he shan't vex me. One favour more—think your wishes realised, and so good morning.

Burgon. Stay. Coming so late among us, we must still do the best for you. 'Tis a cold world for one, but warms up pretty well for a couple. So, there's my hand.

Mrs. Peachd. Let me cross it with a bit of gold, and I'll tell you your fortune.

Burgon. A bit of gold ? What, now, if I've a wedding-ring ?

Mrs. Peachd. Are wedding-rings the ordinary part of your luggage ?

Burgon. Not a bachelor of the Hundred-and-Fourth without. 'Tis our only defence against the sex.

Mrs. Peachd. Well, where is it? I'll wager my liberty for life, it doesn't fit. Come. (*Offering her hand.*)

Burgon. (*Affecting to search.*) Some devil has picked my pocket. But I'll fly and get another.

Mrs. Peachd. Too late—time's up—good day! And brilliant Captain, when next you think of bird-catching, don't forget the net. (*Going.*)

Burgon. This is folly. Now, Harriet—dear Harriet. I'm not impatient, but—

Mrs. Peachd. No? Very good. I'm not impatient either. So, you see, we both are bound in a mutual frost.

Burgon. Confess. When this fortune was left, had you not half-named the day?

Mrs. Peachd. And I'll now name the other half; and the whole shall be the day after I win my suit.

Burgon. Your suit! It may last these ten years.

Mrs. Peachd. Well, you are not impatient.

Burgon. I'll answer for nothing. There are feelings that—in a word, if a capricious, delicious woman, is waylaid, carried off, and bound for life in marriage bonds, all I say is—

Mrs. Peachd. What?

Burgon. Don't blame me.

Mrs. Peachd. I shouldn't. Carry me off! And if you'd only don a bridal suit of chain-armour, and in the broad light of Hyde Park, run away with me upon a pillion—your white plume tossing for a marriage favour—the crowd huzzaing with all their strength, and I screaming with all my weakness,—but no! you won't do it!

Burgon. No?

Mrs. Peachd. No; it is a pretty thing to talk about—but you'll never do it. Such a deed belongs to the dear middle ages. We live in two-penny times, when chivalry goes to church in the family coach, and the god of marriage bargains for his wedding-breakfast. No! Nobody's carried off now-a-days.

Burgon. What say you? We'll revive the fashion, and have our pictures in the weekly papers.

Enter SERVANT, C, and whispers to MRS. PEACHDOWN.

Mrs Peachd. Lud, I'd forgot. Mr. Boggle—such a dear creature! Don't stare. Shew him in. (*To Servant, who goes*

off.) So droll; yet such a man of business! He'll so amuse you. Me he has delighted.

Burgon. Thank you, madam, I'd rather be dull. [Retires.]

Enter APPLEFACE, as Lawyer, c.

Mrs. Peachd. Good Mr. Boggle.

Appleface. Dear Mrs. Peachdown! (Aside.) When she speaks it's better than the band.

Mrs. Peachd. You must stay to-dinner?

Applef. With all the glory in life. (Aside.) I'm clean bewitched. I could refuse you nothing. Did you ever read a magic story, where a young man was changed into a moth, and a beautiful—beautiful woman turned into a wax-candle?

Mrs. Peachd. Never.

Applef. Ha! That story will be true some day.

Mrs. Peachd. (Aside.) Why this is exquisite. Really, Mr. Boggle, the interest you've taken in my suit—the documents you say you have discovered—

Applef. Yes, ma'am. (Aside.) What lies I've told her. But now, I'm sure of it; when a man's really in love, lies go for nothing.

Mrs. Peachd. Remember—we dine at eight.

Applef. (Aside.) And the roll-call's at nine. Never mind. They may take and shoot me in a hollow square, but they shan't shoot me without my dinner.

Mrs. Peachd. (Aside.) The captain takes the room like an angry lion. I'll chafe him still. Mr. Boggle, you must know a friend of mine—a dear friend. Oh, merely a friend. For as I was not too happy in my first match, you'd hardly think I should marry again.

Applef. Quite the contrary, ma'am. For I've heard say, that wedlock's like wine—not to be properly judged of till the second glass.

Mrs. Peachd. Do you think so?

Applef. Try it.

Mrs. Peachd. In good time. But you must know the Captain—

Applef. Captain!

Mrs. Peachd. Captain Burgonet.

Applef. Of the Hundred-and-Fourth? (Aside.) My own Captain! (To MRS PEACHDOWN.) Hush! As he's your friend, I'll wink and let him slip.

Mrs. Peachd. Wink ! Let him slip !

Applef. You see, as a lawyer I'm concerned against the Captain, and it would not be pleasant for us to meet.

Mrs. Peachd. Concerned ! How ?

Applef. How ? The captain's a soldier. Peace, dull work. Must do something. No towns to take—take credit. No blood to shed—shed shopkeeper's ink !

Mrs. Peachd. Mysterious man ! You don't mean—

Applef. I do :

Mrs. Peachd. Debt ?

Applef. Deep !

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) This surprises—pains me. Very deep ?

Applef. So deep, I can't see the end of it.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) Foolish creature. And yet, the Captain's tastes—his habits—are so simple.

Applef. Yes—his habits. (*Aside.*) Must go through with it, now. *He* doesn't wear a diamond necklace.

Mrs. Peachd. Diamond necklace !

Applef. Nor diamond butterflies perching on diamond sprigs. Nor diamond snakes with green eyes twisted in true lovers' diamond knots—nor diamond—

Mrs. Peachd. Impossible !

Applef. Then you hav'n't seen 'em ?

Mrs. Peachd. I ? No !

Applef. You 'stonish me !

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) Debt were nothing ; but such debts ! Snakes, indeed. The deceit—the treachery ! How happy am I that I met this man ! No truth—no sincerity. As I thought, it is my fortune, not myself, that's sought. But I'll be assured—assured.

Applef. Stop. A thought has struck me like a hammer.

Mrs. Peachd. What is it ?

Applef. If you hav'n't seen the diamonds, you may.

Mrs. Peachd. Pshaw ! You'll not go ?

Applef. I'd rather. As I said, I'm concerned—very much concerned.

Mrs. Peachd. I see. Your client is the jeweller ?

Applef. Don't say I said so. (*Aside.*) I didn't.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) His manner shall convince me. Captain—

Applef. (*Restraining her.*) My dear Mrs. Peachdown !

Mrs. Peachd. (*Bringing down BURGONET.*) You must know my friend, Mr. Boggle.

Burgon. (*In astonishment.*) Boggle!

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) Confused—astonished! All's true. Well, at least I am undeceived.

Burgon. Boggle! Why, no—it can't—and yet—Mr. Boggle, have you any relation in the army?

Applef. (*With handkerchief to his face.*) Once had—a twin cousin. Ensign Flambeau—killed in Indy, and buried in laurel leaves like a baby in the wood.

Burgon. (*To MRS. PEACHDOWN.*) Well, I could have sworn your friend was a—a military acquaintance of mine.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) His duplicity is wondrous! Yes, likenesses are so perplexing. But then, what really *is*, what it seems? Who at once has the purity and truth of diamonds? (*Aside.*) He doesn't blush! The truth of our day's a butterfly—at least a brilliant butterfly. (*Aside.*) Ha! he shrinks at that. An idle thing that—

Enter SERVANT, c, with letter.

Serv. (*Aside to MRS. PEACHDOWN.*) From the Chevalier Podovy.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) The Chevalier Podovy—show him in.

[*Exit Servant, c.*

Burgon. Now, Harriet—what is all this? You speak riddles.

Mrs. Peachd. Yes—riddles. Snakes in knots.

Burgon. Snakes!

Mrs. Peachd. In true-love knots, sir.

Burgon. What do you mean?

Mrs. Peachd. And you can ask? (*Aside.*) If I stay, my passion will—How very dull! Well, then, I'll be plain with you.

Burgon. Thank you.

Mrs. Peachd. Very plain. And my meaning is, diamond snakes with emerald eyes. Yes, Captain—emerald eyes.

[*Exit, l.*

Burgon. Emerald eyes, indeed! and just now, she seems to look through them. Pray, sir, can you clear this ferment of—

Applef. No, sir; and won't try. Meddle with women in a

ferment, and you disturb 'em all the more. Leave 'em alone, and it's wonderful how soon they clear themselves.

Burgon. Come, there's wisdom in that—and wisdom gratis. (*Aside.*) I'll leave her to her fancies. A little wholesome coldness may recover her. In the meanwhile, since she dares me to carry her off, let me contrive to give grace to audacity, and make despair delightful. [Exit, c.

Applef. Did a beautiful widow with a face like a garden, and a bank of money, ever marry a drummer? I think not. There's the greater reason it should happen now. Something's in the corner of her eye that takes my breath away. "You must stay to dinner." My heart went clean into a lump of honey, and I felt all over as sweet as a bee-hive. And at this very time I'm being bought into the marriage-service by Rosemary! Yes; I've taken that person's shilling, and promised to be sworn in. Now Rosemary's nothing but a maid; Mrs. Peachdown's a rich lady. I feel it. The star I was born under tells me to look up. If we didn't come into this world to better ourselves, we might as well have stayed where we were. [Retires.

Enter COOLCARD, c, as the Chevalier Podovy.

Coolc. This is my second character to-day. Roguery ought to be well paid—it gives a plain man a deal of trouble. Sometimes, I half wish I'd put up with honest bread—but my bread was so thinly buttered—honest bread is very well. It's the butter that makes the temptation.

Applef. (Aside.) Who's this? Military moustachios, and nothing to match. Shave him, and there's an end of the soldier. Good day, general.

Coolc. (Aside.) The widow's attorney.—*Bon jour,* Lord Chancellor.

Applef. How droll we should know one another at once!

Coolc. Not at all. Dere is a sort of great man dat vid no mistake find out de oder sort of great man. Ha! ha! De general cannot miss de chancellor.

Applef. To be sure. Not that I'm a chancellor.

Coolc. Certainement. Not dat I'm a general. I am de Chevalier Podovy.

Applef. Of what country?

Coolc. None.

Applef. None? Born in a balloon, perhaps?

Coolc. De universe is my country—and all mankind my little broders and sisters.

Applef. Then upon my soul I can't say much for some of your relations.

Coolc. But I sall make England ! Oh, what I sall make England ! I am a citizen of de world, but—

Applef. But you prefer to open shop with us ?

Coolc. But I sall make England so hot, no base foreigner sall come anigh her !

Applef. How ?

Coolc. How !

Enter SERVANT, L.

Serv. (*To COOLCARD.*) Mrs. Peachdown, sir, will see you.

Coolc. Je vole—I fly. How ? You ask—how ? *Ecoutez*—De fool ask how, and de wise man hold his tongue.

[*Exit, shown off by Servant, L.*

Applef. Well, I thought I was a sharp one, but he's notched my razor.

Enter SNOWBALL, C.

Snowball. My dear sir, ten thousand thousand pardons.

Applef. Any number—hang arithmetic.

Snowb. I have followed you even here ;—where is the sweet widow ?—here, to apologise—I was a little worse this morning. I—Mr. Boggle, are you a bachelor ?

Applef. Let me see. Yes—I am.

Snowb. And—I know all beside—young in business. A sweet wife with a little money, Mr. Boggle, is a nice thing.

Applef. Yes ; nice with a little money. Nicer with a good deal.

Snowb. My ward, Cassandra, has a little money ; she also has a heart. She also has—also—

Applef. If it's an inventory, go on.

Snowb. Mr. Boggle, as a man of honour, will you dine with me to-morrow ? Mind, this is not to prejudice the suit. I ask the man to dine, and not the lawyer.

Applef. Sir, I shall be proud to dine upon the difference.

Snowb. For, not even a lovely, sparkling girl with, as times go, not a little money, can win a man like Mr. Boggle from his line of duty.

Applef. Couldn't do it.

Snowb. No, sir; as a lawyer, no doubt you'll deserve this epitaph :

His line of duty
Was the line of beauty.

Applef. The very line I'm given to.

Re-enter BURGONET, c.

Burgonet. I've thought better of it. Here I'll stay till all's explained. *(Seats himself at back.)*

Applef. The Captain again ! My heart drops like a bullet. [To SNOWBALL.] Do you know him ? He's after Mrs. Peachdown.

Snowb. He looks just like it.

Applef. He's been making love to her like a Saracen.

Snowb. Monstrous !

Applef. Swears he'll marry her before she knows it.

Snowb. And the suit not decided. What's to be done ?

Applef. Shoot him. 'Twill make you look all the handsomer in the eyes of the lady. I'm both your friends. The widow really loves you.

Snowb. She does ? Frankly, I'd made up my mind to offer —had slipt from Petgoose ; and—it's very odd—I never leave him, that I don't feel the better for it.

Enter SERVANT, c.

Burgon. Does your lady know I am here ?

Serv. Says, sir, she's busy. *[Exit, c.*

Burgon. Busy ! (To APPLEFACE.) Perhaps, you, sir, as her lawyer,—

Applef. (Avoiding him.) Very busy. Not allowed to give particulars.

Snowb. Yes, my dear friend Harriet—

Burgon. Your friend ! Your name ?

Snowb. Snowball.

Applef. All right. "Snowball v. Peachdown." Cause withdrawn. *[Runs off, c.*

Burgon. You don't say withdrawn ?

Snowb. Why not ?

Burgon. You are the best of fellows—have made me the

happiest. I'll be married this very week, and upon the spot invite you to the wedding.

Re-enter MRS. PEACHDOWN, L.

My dear Harriet, Mr. Snowball—

Mrs. Peachd. Mr. Snowball! this return visit is kind, chivalrous, and so like the middle ages.

Burgon. But Mr. Snowball is—

Mrs. Peachd. The spur of knighthood, and the plume of grace.

Burgon. But Mr. Snowball—

Mrs. Peachd. Will answer for himself. Talk, Mr. Snowball.

Snowb. (Aside.) She's a sweet woman, after all. I will talk, give me time and place.

Mrs. Peachd. Time and place? Nothing so willingly.

Burgon. (Aside.) Yes: she thinks to vex me. Ha! ha!

Snowb. (Aside to her.) At a word, shall we dismiss the lawyers, and call in the parson?

Mrs. Peachd. We save anxiety.

Snowb. And pocket costs.

Mrs. Peachd. And law's uncertain.

Snowb. And matrimony sure.

Mrs. Peachd. (Aloud.) What, now, were I to prove a wild-goose and say there's my hand?

Burgon. Aye, what would Mr. Snowball answer?

Enter COOLCARD, L, who remains at back.

Snowb. Answer?

Burgon. There's the lady's hand, with her heart somewhere in it. Well, you won't take it?

Snowb. Why not?

Burgon. Why? (*Aside to him.*) You're a dead man. The lady's hand! I see your grave already made in it, and at this moment smell the gunpowder that sends you there.

Snowb. (Aside.) Petgoose was right—I'm not strong. If I could marry her first, she wouldn't let me fight afterwards. Dispatch is all. (*Aside to BURGONET.*) Very well, sir—very well.

Mrs. Peachd. Mr. Snowball, I am going to dinner.

Burgon. You see—Mr. Snowball has no appetite.

Mrs. Peachd. Your pardon, Captain. I never saw a hungrier gentleman. Will you lead me down?

Snowb. With rapture. But who could be hungry—vulgarly hungry—before such a feast of roses?

Burgon. (*Aside to SNOWBALL.*) You shall hear from me.

Mrs. Peachd. I'm sorry, Captain, to appear inhospitable—but it's a business dinner.

Snowb. Yes, business. (*Aside.*) If I could elope with her to-night!

Mrs. Peachd. A little peace-making banquet. Only three.

Snowb. Peace, pleasure, and business. Two turtle-doves, and—

Mrs. Peachd. And one attorney.

[*MRS. PEACHDOWN curtsies to BURGONET, and is led off by SNOWBALL, R.*]

Burgon. This is too absurd. Nevertheless, I'll shoot him like—

Coolc. (*Coming down.*) Shoot! As de friend of Madame Pitchdown, I shall be proud to load your pistol.

Burgon. You!

Coolc. Oui, Capitaine. I am a man of *honneur*, qui—

Burgon. That is just possible; but as I don't even fight upon a hurry, I won't burn priming on a doubt. [*Exit, c.*]

Coolc. Indeed? Nevertheless, and in despite of you, I'll turn the penny on your gunpowder. [*Exit, c.*]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—SNOWBALL'S house, as in *Act I.*

Dust. (*Discovered, with newspaper.*) Ever since Rosemary told me of that annuity, I somehow always read the "Deaths" first. A weakness, I know; but a nat'r'nal one. (*Bell rings.*)

Enter ROSEMARY, R.

Rosem. Why, John, that's Mr. Snowball's bell.

Dust. I know that—but 'tisn't Mr. Snowball that's ringing it.

Rosem. Not Mr. Snowball in his own bed !

Dust. No. You see he came home late, and brought along with him—

Rosem. What am I about to hear ?

Dust. Nothing—for I shan't tell you.

(*Going.*)

Rosem. John—Dust ! (*Bell rings.*) Never mind the bell. Brought, you say—

Dust. Brought Mr. Boggle, his dear friend, as he called him.

Rosem. (*Aside.*) My own Appleface—and sleeping here !

Dust. In my time I've seen a deal of drink—both wine and spirits, but never in such a state before.

Rosem. Was Mr. Boggle tipsy ?

Dust. No—drunk.

Rosem. (*Aside.*) That he should have a vice, and I not know it !

Dust. Such doings ! Boggle hugged master, and swore that the house held the jewel of his life ; his diamond, his ruby, and his mother-of-pearls.

Rosem. (*Aside.*) Sweet, but imprudent. And what said master ?

Dust. Master said 'twas a jewel for a king, and the very thing for Boggle.

Rosem. (*Aside.*) I see it—he has confessed his passion, but said nothing of the drum.

Dust. Then, going up stairs, Boggle tumbled into master's room, and master made off and tucked himself up in the Chinese chamber, whereupon— (*Bell rings violently.*)

Rosem. Run ! Mr. Boggle may need something. Let us not forget hospitality—specially in the houses of other people.

Dust. Hospitality ! Suppose now he wants more brandy-and-soda ?

Rosem. Repentance in any way is a virtue—let him have it. [*Exit DUST, L.*] That he should have slept under the same roof—the same roof !

Enter SNOWBALL, L, in morning gown.

Snowb. Down before Petgoose, so he won't know where I slept. Droll man that Boggle, but so he marries Cassandra and—what, Rosemary !

Rosem. (*Aside.*) He knows my secret—he speaks so soft.

Snowb. Rosemary, I'll trust you. I think of changing my adviser.

Rosem. Couldn't do better, sir. That Petgoose ! He rolls you round and round like one of his own Paradise Pills.

Snowb. I mean—I shall marry.

Rosem. Why not, sir ? It's your duty. You know, sir, we're not like the phœnixes ; we can't live and die single, and leave a son and heir in our cinders. I, sir, intend to marry, too.

Snowb. And when ?

Rosem. 'Tisn't for me just now to name the time, but to bow to it when it comes.

Snowb. Such resignation is delightful.

Doctor Petgoose. (*Without, L.*) Call immediately—two coaches. Two !

Snowb. That's Petgoose. Two coaches ! Never going out in both !

Rosem. Shouldn't wonder, sir. When he likes, he can make himself big enough for anything.

Enter PETGOOSE, L, drest to go out.

Snowb. Abroad so early ! What calls you out ?

Petgoose. My reputation. Do you think I'll wait till the hatchment's over the door ?

Snowb. Hatchment, for what ? Your reputation ?

Petgoose. No satire, Mr. Snowball. Die you may, as you will, and soon ; but you shall not die to disgrace me.

Snowb. I'm quite ready to bear all the disgrace myself ; but what have I done ?

Petgoose. Done ! You dine out. You eat—how do I know what you eat ? I repeat it—how do I know what you eat ? You drink the night-air ; and that's not all. You sleep out of your own bed ; and to concentrate all the horrors of life in two devastating syllables—damp sheets !

Snowb. No !

Rosem. No !

Petgoose. (*To ROSEMARY.*) Silence !

Rosem. I sha'n't. I consider damp sheets an aspersion on the female character, and I won't bear it.

Petgoose. I say, damp sheets. I give your nerves two hours ; and then, you'll be tied up every bit of you in a million knots. —Yes, an inextricable human bundle !

Snowb. (*Aside.*) Can it be ?

Petgoose. I proceed to your apartment, smelling alcohol—

Rosem. (*Aside.*) That's genteel for brandy.

Petgoose. When I find—

Snowb. Boggle, the attorney. Droll fellow! How is he?

Petgoose. In the first stage of sobriety, but incoherent. Talks of hollow squares, and deep files—

Snowb. Thinking of the Inns of Court, no doubt.

Petgoose. Executions and muffled drums.

Rosem. (*Aside.*) Oh! it comes with a crash upon me! He's slept out of barracks—he's a deserter—he's shot and lost. He shall never leave the house—never leave his room! Yes, I'm determined, sooner than be killed in that way, I'll call in the doctor, and he shall never—never leave his bed! [*Exit*, c.

Snowb. And you are really going?

Petgoose. (*Seating himself, and taking off gloves.*) Inexorably—going. Die in any hands you will, you shall not die in mine.

Snowb. Pooh-pooh, you mistake. I'm now quite well. And I begin to feel that my weakness has been too much physic.

Petgoose. You will not insult the faculty, Mr. Snowball?

Snowb. Oh no. Still I must say, I've swallowed so many of your Paradise Pills, it's a wonder I hav'n't followed their direction.

Petgoose. And this is human gratitude! But as I observe in my "Pearls"—to the ungrateful there is no past. However, I am gone—gone.

Enter DUST, c.

Dust. Both coaches at the door, Doctor. Got 'em myself.

Petgoose. Very well.—(*Violently.*) Very well. [*Exit DUST, c.*

Snowb. One, I take it, for you—one for your luggage? We part friends, I hope? For though I'm a giant now, you have done me good.

Petgoose. Oh no! Not I.

Snowb. Yes, you have. I was weak, but you have renovated—

Petgoose. Weak—renovated! Mr. Snowball, I found you a grasshopper—I leave you a rhinoceros.

Snowb. And I'm thankful—and there's my hand. Good bye.

Petgoose. (*Taking SNOWBALL's hand and gradually feeling pulse.*) Yes, we shall always be friends—always. How the

old pressure of this hand almost softens my resolution ! I who know so well your system, know not the texture of my own heart. Snowball !

Snowb. Petgoose !

Petgoose. One question. Think you, as a physician and a friend, I'd leave you with a pulse like this ?

Snowb. Can't say.

Petgoose. You can't ? Then still you have to know me. Never—never ! *(Embraces him.)*

Re-enter Dust, c.

Dust. Got your boxes in, Doctor. What next ?

Petgoose. What next, fellow ? Get them out again.

(DUST gives letter to SNOWBALL.)

Snowb. *(Opening letter.)* "The Chevalier Podovy." "Important bus'ness." *(Aside to DUST.)* Say I'm out.

Dust. *(Aside to SNOWBALL.)* Says he must see you. Comes from Captain Burgonet.

Snowb. *(Aside.)* 'Tis a challenge. The Captain ! Why, he'd bring me down like a tumbler pigeon. What's to be done ? *(Stands, as if suddenly transfixed by pain.)* Oh ! oh !

Petgoose. What's the matter ?

Snowb. Damp sheets ! Oh !

Petgoose. Rheumatism—I knew it.

Snowb. Discharge every woman in the house ! Oh ! Damp sheets !

Petgoose. Humph ! Where's the pain ?

Snowb. Where is it ? Where isn't it ? Not an inch of nerve that isn't a needle.

Petgoose. I foretold this—I knew it. Yet do I boast ? Do I triumph ?

Snowb. A chair ! If I could only sit down. *(To DUST.)* Don't touch me ! A touch of your little finger and I'm cut in a million pieces.

Petgoose. *(Aside.)* He has no more rheumatism than a cricket. What's in the wind ?

Snowb. *(Having gradually seated himself.)* Roses ! roses !

Dust. Is the pain all over you, sir ?

Snowb. From head to foot. Ha ! we're poor creatures ! To think that two or three yards of damp flax should so knock down the majesty of man ! Oh ! From head to foot !

Petgoose. The attack general, the remedy must be general too. My dear friend, I shall steep you in the very purest vinegar—

Snowb. Vinegar!

Petgoose. Diluting the very strongest mustard. I shall.

Snowb. The devil you will?

Petgoose. And now I hope you'll acknowledge what a blessing it is I didn't leave the house?

Dust. What, sir, shall I say to the gentleman?

Snowb. Show him in. [Exit *Dust*, c.] Must see him. My honour is concerned. A duel.

Petgoose. A duel! You fight? You can't stand.

Snowb. Not a leg. And it has just struck me that you may give the fellow a certificate to that effect.

Petgoose. A duel! My dear friend, now I don't wonder you're as bad as you are.

Enter COOLCARD as Podovy, c.

Coolcard. Monsieur Snowball, I have de honneur—

Snowb. Don't come near me. Doctor, tell the Chevalier how bad I am.

Petgoose. Mr. Snowball is in an alarming condition. The action of his heart is specific. The rate of his pulse terrific. His sanguineous system mephitic—and, in short, not a single symptom that is not mortific.

Snowb. You hear, sir?

Petgoose. I wouldn't say as much before any patient. But I know Mr. Snowball's moral strength. His body is weak, but his mind tremendous. Yes, a sword—a Damascus blade in a brown paper scabbard.

Coolc. C'est bien. For de sooner he shall draw de sword—

Snowb. I draw a sword! Look at me. Couldn't draw a toothpick.

Coolc. C'est bien. Den you shall fight with pistolets.

Snowb. Pistols! With pleasure, but—look at me!—couldn't pull a trigger.

Coolc. Bah! A leetel new-born babe shall pull a trigger.

Snowb. Yes, but—look at me!—I can't stand.

Coolc. C'est bien—you shall sit. Den if de bullet hit you—tant mieux—you shall not tomber—tumble.

Snowb. (Forgetting himself.) Zounds, sir—I—oh! There—you see! (Drops in chair.)

Petgoose. (*To SNOWBALL.*) You *will* use the sword—you won't think of the paper! (*To COOLCARD.*) What is this, sir? Why do you break in upon—(*to SNOWBALL*) will you allow me the expression?—a dying man?

Coolc. Dying man no need of wife. Mr. Snowball shall give up Mrs. Pitchdown—

Snowb. Never! I'll perish first—that is, when I'm well enough to perish.

Petgoose. Very right. For to perish in your present state would be no compliment to any woman.

Snowb. Sir,—you are Captain Burgonet's friend—his bosom friend?

Coolc. Assurément. I carry him round and round my finger, as you carry dat sparkling ring.

Snowb. Say, then, when I'm well, I shall be only too happy to fight—describe my condition and—will you do me another favour—accept this ring?

Petgoose. Mr. Snowball!

Snowb. And, however this matter may end, wear it for my sake. Gently. (*Offers his finger.*) Gently!

Coolc. (Tenderly taking off ring.) Monsieur! Are you better, now?

Snowb. I do feel relieved. And I may count upon your friendship?

Petgoose. Can't do otherwise. Real friendship, now—goes upon a diamond.

Coolc. (Aside.) Luck beyond my hopes! And now to make off, while the luck lasts. Monsieur, I shall tell how sick you are. And I shall come every day to watch your pillow, and say a leetel prayer. And so, *courage!* You shall soon be upon your leg—shall soon receive a bullet like a lion, and fall like a man.

Snowb. Thank you.

Coolc. Adieu, mon cher ami. (*Embracing SNOWBALL.*)

Snowb. Murder! My nerves!

Coolc. Pardon ma sensibilité. The captain shall wait. *Pardon—et encore, adieu—adieu.* [*Exit, c.*

Petgoose. How are you now?

Snowb. Better.

Petgoose. And you intend to marry the widow?

Snowb. I do—rheumatism permitting.

Enter CASSANDRA, R.

Cassan. Rosemary's told me all. Last night—that dreadful bed! But be comforted: I'll send away all the maids.

Snowb. You're very good—but I'm better.

Cassan. That you should be ill, now! (*Aside to SNOWBALL.*) For who think you is here—comes, she says, to see me?

Snowb. Not Mrs. Peachdown? You didn't say I was ill?

Cassan. A little ill—delicate. And you know our sex, she seemed to like you all the more.

Petgoose. (*Aside.*) The widow here! I feel an impulse of bold benevolence. She must and shall be saved from this miserable cripple. (*To SNOWBALL.*) My dear friend, I go to provide your comfort. A hot bed—strong vinegar and—

Snowb. But I'm better.

Petgoose. Better! I keep up my spirits but—you were never worse. My dearest friend, the pericardium—the pericardium. [*Exit, L.*]

Snowb. (*Leaving chair*) You see I'm well—only weak. And Mrs. Peachdown.—

Cassan. You've quite bewitched her. I was always her confidante, though younger than she, before—

Snowb. By the way, what—exactly—is the widow's age?

Cassan. Well, sir, I knew how old she was five years ago, but I can't say how young she is now. But as I was saying, before that foolish quarrel that separated the families, I was always in her confidence, and—yes, you have fixed the butterfly. What a wife she'll make!

Snowb. Think so? Well, I'll make a husband for you. Will you have him?

Cassan. Have him? Whom? Happiness is—

Snowb. Oh, you must be happy. He'll keep his coach in a twelvemonth. But you've seen him—it's Boggle. A droll fellow, but deep—and loves you with—

Cassan. Boggle! Ha! ha! ha!

Snowb. What! laugh at an honest man's affection?

Cassan. Oh, I only laugh to escape emotion. The louder I laugh the deeper I feel. Boggle! Ha! ha!

Enter MRS. PEACHDOWN, R.

Mrs. Peachd. Dear Mr. Snowball!

Snowb. Dear Mrs. Peachdown—Harriet!

Mrs. Peachd. Why, I thought to find you immoveable. A statue—a marble statue.

Snowb. If I was flint, there are eyes that with a twinkle would make me flesh again.

Mrs. Peachd. I never will forgive that Petgoose. He told me you were bound in rheumatism—motionless as a mummy. That you were only alive in your tongue; in fact positively dead to all the world, except the undertaker.

Snowb. Look at me.

Mrs. Peachd. Then it's all untrue? You'll not wither in your chair like an overkept nut in its shell? And you'll not sit torpid in the world like a frog in a stone? And you are better than clay, and quite as quick as fuller's-earth?

Snowb. Frogs and fuller's-earth! What d'ye mean?

Mrs. Peachd. I but repeat the doctor. He said, henceforth you'd be a canker and a trouble. A blight to orange blossoms—a paralysis to love! And you are not? No—you can move! Move—you can walk! Walk—you can dance!

(SNOWBALL, as she speaks, walks, and dances about.)

Snowb. (Dancing briskly.) No blight in this, I think—no paralysis here.

Mrs. Peachd. Well, I am disappointed.

Cassan. Disappointed?

Snowb. Would you have preferred the frog, the clay, and—

Mrs. Peachd. Selfishly speaking,—yes. For then I had shown the world it was your mind I valued—your mind, sir; whether blazing in the brightest lamp, or twinkling in the darkest lanthorn.

Snowb. And the doctor said I was dying—gone?

Mrs. Peachd. He said there wasn't in you life enough to ornament the earth, or death enough to enrich it.

Snowb. Damp sheets, nothing more. A stitch in the nerves—just a stitch, that's all. The traitor! But I've done with him, as I'll prove, done with him and his Pills of Paradise, too.

(Takes pill-box from pocket.)

Enter ROSEMARY, R.

Rosem. The Doctor not here, sir?

Snowb. Rosemary—take these pills and—(Offering pill-box.)

Rosem. Thank you, sir—but I always refused the Doctor himself.

Snowb. Take 'em, and throw 'em into the street.

Rosem. Consider, sir. Some unoffending dog may find 'em.

Snowb. Where is the doctor?

Rosem. That's what I want to know, Mr. Boggle's so very ill. (*Aside.*) If Petgoose would only shave his head and put blisters to his feet, I should be a happy woman.

Snowb. Ill! I must see him, for in my pocket here—bless me!—(*seeing morning-gown*)—this robe—Mrs. Peachdown, ten thousand pardons—I fly to change. Yes, my dear lady, I fly—and frogs don't fly. The quack, I've done with him for ever. And for the orange-blossoms—you may prepare them—indeed—garland them—(*sings.*) “I love her, how I love her!”—no paralysis here, I think—“Tol lol lol lol lol lol.”

[*Exit singing and dancing, l.*

Mrs. Peachd. Ha! ha! ha! The dance of dissolution!

Cassan. What could make the Doctor so exaggerate?

Mrs. Peachd. You here behold the irresistible cause. The Doctor is pleased to save me from his patient. My beauty—thus speaks the Doctor—my beauty, like a wreath of roses, would only crown a death's head; my virtues—says the Doctor—would only shine, like stars, upon a tombstone; and finally—and again the Doctor—to go to church with Mr. Snowball, would be to act chief mourner at the funeral of my own felicity.

Cassan. The insolence of this Petgoose!

Mrs. Peachd. In his own words, the Doctor would snatch me from imbecility to the very rudest of health. Well, at least there's sport in it—sport that may beguile the heart-ache.

Cassan. The heart-ache! Harriet?

Mrs. Peachd. My dear, I've been so deceived. Fortunately, Mr. Boggle, as the lawyer of—

Cassan. You have been deceived. The man is no lawyer; 'twas but the whim of the minute. Would you think it, Boggle is—

Rosem. Don't, miss. I don't mind your saying what he's not, so that just now you don't say what he is.

Mrs. Peachd. Why, what is this? He professed to tell me of—

CAPTAIN BURGONET is shown in by Servant, c.

Captain Burgonet!

Burgon. Your pardon, ladies—the man has mistaken. I would see Mr. Snowball.

Cassan. I will seek him. (*To Mrs. PEACHDOWN.*) I'll leave you—indeed, I will. Come, Rosemary.

Rosem. (*Aside to CASSANDRA.*) If they discover him, they'll shoot him! If they shoot him, they kill me! I feel it—two turtles with one bullet! [*Exeunt CASSANDRA and ROSEMARY, L.*

Burgon. To see you here, madam, is a pleasure I looked not for.

Mrs. Peachd. If there be pleasure in the meeting, you've the best right to enjoy it, since 'tis all your own.

Burgon. No, Harriet, you can't be bitter if you would. For the little loves sit in your eyes, and laugh every syllable into sweetness. Still, I am surprised to see you in this house.

Mrs. Peachd. This house! Wait awhile, and even you may own that I have the best, the dearest right to it.

Burgon. Impossible. Yesterday I was fool enough, for five minutes, to be jealous. But, jealous of Snowball! No; even if I could doubt your constancy, I must respect your taste.

Mrs. Peachd. Taste! Mr. Snowball is a man of solid qualities. A man, too, whose delicacy of constitution only harmonises with the refinement of his soul. His health may be weak, but his principles are oak—yes, sir, oak.

Burgon. Excellent principles, no doubt, to go to sea with. But for matrimony, madam, something more is needed than principles, however close the grain, and however susceptible of polish. Didn't his principles throw you into Chancery?

Mrs. Peachd. Only that his affection—his chivalrous affection—might take me out again.

Burgon. And now, as he fears the worst, now that all his guns will be carried by law, he hopes to turn church bells to his best artillery. But I come to have some talk with him. For though I may not marry you—indeed, on second thoughts, I don't think I would marry you—

Mrs. Peachd. Sir!

Burgon. Nevertheless, you deserve better treatment than Snowball.

Mrs. Peachd. Better! (*Aside.*) But I'll punish him! With such a husband, life doubles its felicity. The roses are multiplied, and the thorns are nought. With such a man—but here the dear enchanter comes!

Enter SNOWBALL, drest, L. Burgonet retires.

My dear sir, why, you look better every minute.

Snowb. And I feel sparkling.

Mrs. Peachd. And you hold your resolution? You dismiss that dreadful doctor?

Snowb. The Doctor! Like a mouse in a cheese, he has grown fat upon my constitution. I renounce him. For here's my doctor now. Those eyes, those lips! The light and balm of life. I grow a giant while I gaze. I drink *elixir vitae* while—(*BURGONET comes down; SNOWBALL, on seeing him, is again suddenly crippled*)—Oh! oh! Rheumatism—a steel lance, clean between my shoulders down—down to my right heel!

Mrs. Peachd. My dear sir—

Snowb. Don't—there's an angel—don't touch me. A feather—even a feather—laid upon me—you can't think it—but even a feather!

Burgon. Rheumatism? Not the sort of complaint that turns the single roses of life into double ones?

Snowb. Sir, the man who jokes with rheumatism is—is—but no, I may be on the rack, but I'll be dignified.

Mrs. Peachd. Suffering so endured is quite sublime.

Snowb. What, though crippled, I have your affection?

Mrs. Peachd. Don't mention it. Crippled—affection! Oh, sir, I care not to confess it, were you immovable, I should quite adore you.

Snowb. You hear, Captain—touching, delightful? And Captain, after what your friend witnessed—

Burgon. My friend!

Snowb. I did not expect this visit. And, sir, in my helpless condition I—I—oh—

Enter PETGOOSE, followed by CASSANDRA, L.

Petgoose. As I expected. You see, madam—you see!

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside to him.*) I thought your fears enlarged the danger. He looks ill!

Petgoose. (*Aside.*) Looks! but for his obstinacy of character, he ought to look twice as ill. (*To SNOWBALL.*) My dear friend, how do you feel?

Snowb. Feel! I feel as if I was turned into a hedgehog, and the hedgehog turned the wrong way.

Petgoose. Of course, I knew you did—the pericardium.

Burgon. And do you mean to certify that the gentleman is in danger?

Petgoose. Sir, I am Mr. Snowball's doctor, and therefore know he's in the greatest danger.

Snowb. (*Aside.*) The scoundrel! Never better!

Petgoose. Repose is his only hope. Yes. Tranquillity and sudorifics.

Enter ROSEMARY, L.

Rosem. The bed's burning hot, Doctor. And the boiling vinegar and—

Petgoose. And hold—prepare some hot bricks.

Rosem. Red hot?

Petgoose. Not quite. [*Exit ROSEMARY, L.*] Heat and tranquillity in a few weeks may do much.

Mrs. Peachd. A few weeks! Say not a few weeks.

Snowb. No—a few days. (*Aside to her.*) My life, I'm not so bad—but humour the Doctor—let him have his way.

Mrs. Peachd. You'll soon be well.

Snowb. Your wishes will be my best medicine. (*Aside to her.*) Don't say a word—you shall hear from me—I'll be well to-morrow.

Petgoose. Where are the servants? (*Enter Servants.*)—Carry Mr. Snowball to his room.

(*The SERVANTS are about to lift the chair.*)

Mrs. Peachd. Gently—gently. Pray take care.

Snowb. Bless you!

Mrs. Peachd. In a few weeks?

Snowb. A few weeks. (*Aside to her.*) To-morrow.

Burgon. (*Aside to PETGOOSE.*) And is he so very ill?

Petgoose. (*Aside to BURGONET.*) Sir, if he isn't, I'll stake my reputation that he will be.

Mrs. Peachd. Ha, Doctor!

Petgoose. Ha, madam! But restrain your tears, and let us to luncheon.

[*Servants carry off SNOWBALL in chair, ROSEMARY attending.*

PETGOOSE offers MRS. PEACHDOWN his arm; and BURGONET follows with CASSANDRA.

ACT V.

SCENE.—*In SNOWBALL'S House. The same as in previous Act.*

Enter ROSEMARY, c. as from the Street.

Rosem. Here it is—(*producing it*)—the lovely parchment, the Horse Guards instrument, as Mr. Audley calls it, that makes my Appleface my own. He may now sink in his easy chair and put up his drum-sticks for life. Yes—yes—I've bought him from ball-cartridge, and—(*kissing parchment*)—here's the acknowledgment. When married, I think I shall have it framed, and hang it over our domestic chimney-piece. How he'll doat upon me! But let me fly to him—for he doesn't know that I've been out. No; I'll surprise him in his misery, and whilst he lies shaking at the thoughts of muffled drums, and—why, here he comes, laughing and—and with him Miss Cassandra! Suspicions cut across me, but be still, my heart, although I have paid the money. [Retires.]

Enter APPLEFACE and CASSANDRA, c.

Cassan. No—you're safe; as yet I've kept your secret.

Applef. And I wish I could pay you as I ought for the trouble. But I've nothing but my hand and my heart, if they're of any service to you.

Cassan. Service! to me!

Applef. Why, Mr. Snowball thought they might be useful.

Cassan. But, then, Mr. Snowball thought you a gentleman.

Applef. What of that? When we're well married, 'twill be time enough to be found out.

Cassan. (Aside.) The fellow's insolence is delicious. (*Seeing her.*) What—Rosemary? Then she shall punish him. You know, my fortune—

Applef. Isn't much; but contentment makes such a lump of a little. (*Aside.*) If she'd only marry me, and carry me out of the country!

Cassan. Again, would you break Rosemary's heart?

Applef. Couldn't do it. Break it! Couldn't even chip it.

Cassan. But gratitude ! Isn't the poor thing going to buy you out ?

Applef. Yes—out and out. And after all, I don't like it. You see, it's being bought by a woman like a fancy poodle. I should always feel as if I'd got a dog-collar about my neck, with my wife's name cut upon it.

Cassan. Then you're not false, only—

Applef. Only independent. (*Aside.*) She softens ! Nothing can resist the Hundred-and-Fourth. Is it a stolen match—a runaway ring ? Will you give me your hand ?

Cassan. Spare my confusion.

Applef. I will—I won't see it. (*Turns away his head.*) Now, then—

Cassan. (*Beckons down ROSEMARY who, after a struggle, places her hand in the hand of APPLEFACE, as CASSANDRA speaks.*) Now, then—the hand that's given you—don't look yet—

Applef. I won't, but I must squeeze.

Cassan. The hand carries its heart. Honour, deserve, and cherish it. [*Exit, r.*]

Applef. I must—I do—I will—and now, one kiss—

Rosem. At your peril. No—never again ; never—if I perish !

Applef. My dearest, only love—my—

Rosem. No crocodile words for me. Monster !

Applef. Why will you mistake me ? Don't you see I did it on purpose ? I knew your hand as if it was my other one. Besides, I heard you before.

Rosem. Heard me !

Applef. Heard the rustling of your precious gown. I'd pick it out from the Queen's whole drawing-room. Why, my Rosy, darling, do you think any woman on this 'versal earth could rustle like you ? Arn't you satisfied ?

Rosem. Satisfied ! You that I was going to buy out—you that, I may say, I scraped together shilling by shilling ! You—but I shall be satisfied !

Applef. I hope so !

Rosem. Sweetly satisfied—for you'll be shot. And do you think I'll grieve—I'll shed a tear ? No—deceiver ; quite the reverse. Now I know my strength. They'll shoot you for a deserter, and in a new white-watered silk, with only a bottle of salts, I'll see the sight !

Applef. What! The husband you have purchased? The man of your heart and cash?

Rosem. The fancy poodle, with his ready-money collar?

Applef. Anything you please; your pet—your slave—your husband—drummer—friend!

Rosem. (*Aside.*) Hold! If he knows I've paid the money, he may make the debt a debt of honour, and never marry me!

Applef. See me shot! As if those cruel eyes had not more power than ball? I'm shot already if my Rosy frowns.

Rosem. Oh, I dare say. Much you care. But it's like the army! Win a woman's heart, and then break it into little pieces. Break it, did I say?—chip it! Alexander, I couldn't have believed it.

Applef. Then don't. When I'm shot, indeed—as I feel I shall be—I should like to leave you, at least—

Rosem. What?

Applef. My widow.

Rosem. Don't—and yet 'twould be a horrid consolation!

Applef. 'Twould give you a right, a license I may say, to weep and be unhappy.

Rosem. I feel the dreadful privilege.

Applef. And will you have it? (*Aside.*) I know she's saved enough to take us both to America. Rosy?

Rosem. Alexander! (*Aside.*) And when I've safely married him, I may give him his discharge at the church-door.

Applef. For after all that's passed, I shouldn't like to go off a bachelor—to die in my bloom like a single pink. And so—even though shooting should be sure—you'll marry me?

Rosem. You don't deserve it, but I'll be your widow.

Applef. You will? (*Aside.*) We'll have a cabin passage to New York. My widow! Then at the worst, when all the double flowers of married love are blown and gone—

Rosem. 'Twill be at least a comfort to enjoy the weeds.

Exeunt, c.

Enter MRS. PEACHDOWN and CASSANDRA, R.

Mrs. Peachd. Positively, an invitation to elope! (*reads letter.*) "Knowing your heart"—'tis thus the sick man writes—"I have made all preparations. Attend, my angel"—meaning me—"and approve. To-night, we'll leave for Dover, cross to France—be married to-morrow and—and"—this I cannot decipher.

Cassan. (*Taking letter.*) "And be in raptures ever after."

Mrs. Peachd. Ha! no wonder I stopped at that.

Cassan. But why steal a match? You're both of age?

Mrs. Peachd. Purely out of doting love for me. Mr. Snowball would avoid the Captain's wrath—it might be dangerous. Such I know the cause, although the patient's delicacy has suppressed it.

Cassan. And you come—

Mrs. Peachd. For double sport. To tease the Captain, and to test the sick. Knowing that Burgonet will seek me at home—and since he's innocent, I must forgive him—I left a letter that business called me here, with strict injunction that he should not follow.

Cassan. Oh! And Mr. Snowball the sufferer, above?

Mrs. Peachd. I've such a touchstone for his truth; poverty, my dear. For half-an-hour, I propose to be penniless; my fortune vanished, and my cause without a hope.

Cassan. Why, do you doubt the result?

Mrs. Peachd. Doubt it? no. But 'twill be such pastime to see his change. The creature's passion, like a dolphin, will die all colours. And then—

Cassan. Hush! the Doctor—with a face, mischievous as his own physic labels. I'll leave you.

Mrs. Peachd. Do. [*Exit CASSANDRA, R.*] I must marry Burgonet—if only to stop the impertinence of others.

Enter DOCTOR PETGOOSE, c.

Petgoose. My dear madam, I have sought you at your house.

I—

Mrs. Peachd. You are very kind. I never less needed a doctor—

Petgoose. My dear madam, as I observed in my "Pearls to Pigs"—but perhaps you have seen the work.

Mrs. Peachd. I am unfortunate. Such "Pearls" have never fallen in my way.

Petgoose. "Man is a creature of externals"—

Mrs. Peachd. And woman, sir?

Petgoose. "And woman's one physician, her looking glass." Now you, madam—you look lovely, but alas! you don't know how you feel.

Mrs. Peachd. Yes I do. I feel happy in my ignorance.

Petgoose. "The bud of the rose"—another of my pearls—"knows not the canker at its heart, but"—

Mrs. Peachd. But as my heart is pretty well half-blown, I know there's not a bit of canker in it.

Petgoose. Ha ! madam, the eyes of science—

Mrs. Peachd. The eyes of science may go to sleep, I shall never care to wake 'em. Tell me, and truly, how is Mr. Snowball ?

Petgoose. He's within a month at most of the daisies.

Mrs. Peachd. The daisies !

Petgoose. "The daisy"—says one of my pearls—"the daisy is death's forget-me-not."

Mrs. Peachd. A flower, possibly you may have cultivated ? Then, Mr. Snowball,—but I may trust you ?

Petgoose. With your life.

Mrs. Peachd. Thank you, I'd rather keep it. Mr. Snowball is in no state to travel ?

Petgoose. Travel ! Not quite screwed up for that.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Gives letter.*) Look here—but in confidence.

Petgoose. Now, were there any ground for the disease, I should say brain fever. Why, he offers instant marriage.

Mrs. Peachd. It is quite between us.

(SNOWBALL looks from room at side.)

Petgoose. Ha, madam ! let it be between us.

Mrs. Peachd. Sir !

Petgoose. For this I followed you home. Behold—(*falling on his knees*)—can I go lower ?

Mrs. Peachd. Not unless you prescribe for yourself. Insolent impostor !

Petgoose. Impostor ! (*Rising.*) I am content. For, as I say, in my "Pearls," it was wisely given to woman not to know the counterfeit from the true thing. Farewell, madam. I would have made you happy.

Mrs. Peachd. Made me happy !

Petgoose. Yes,—made. For as I observe to the "Pigs"—human happiness is a plant that, when it will not grow of itself, may be forced to grow. Farewell, for as I further observe, there are situations, in which the highest majesty is the profoundest silence. (*Aside.*) I'm aqua-fortis from head to foot. Snowball travel ! He may ; but it shall not be without feathers.

[*Exit, c.*

SNOWBALL runs down from room at side.

Snowb. The villain! the traitor! Only think, the viper that I have nursed in my bosom!

Mrs. Peachd. And the viper that made himself so much at home there! But how are you really?

Snowb. How? A diamond without a flaw. I feel in armour! No knight of a middle age—I mean of the middle ages—but never mind me. Think of yourself and my letter. Shall we fit—shall we fly? Speak. Your heart—

Mrs. Peachd. Of my heart, sir, I need not speak. But I have something serious to relate of—

Snowb. Of what?

Mrs. Peachd. Of my pocket. Bless me! You're very pale. Shall I go on?

Snowb. Certainly,—but I am faint. (*Takes a chair.*)

Mrs. Peachd. My fortune was embarked—

Snowb. Embarked! Oh dear! I thought it safe in dock—I mean in the Bank.

Mrs. Peachd. It was once; but 'tis a long story. The advice of foolish friends—and some grains of avarice, I fear, and—and pardon my blushes.

Snowb. I can't—that is—(*Aside.*) What is she going to say?

Mrs. Peachd. In a word, my whole fortune, trusted to foreign venture—I only had the news this morning—is a wreck.

Snowb. Gone to bits?

Mrs. Peachd. Bits, sir! There's not a bit left.

Snowb. What an awful world is this!

Mrs. Peachd. Still, sir, I feel grateful—

Snowb. So do I. (*Aside.*) What an escape!

Mrs. Peachd. For my many friends.

Snowb. To be sure. Friends are like money; it is only our wants that rouse their sleeping value.

Mrs. Peachd. Beautiful.

Snowb. And now, no doubt, they'll all be wide awake to—to your necessities. Dear me! I feel very ill.

Mrs. Peachd. And I am so relieved that I have told you.

Snowb. (*Aside.*) Without money, she can't go on with the suit. Boggle swears I have the best of it, and—

Mrs. Peachd. What is the matter, sir?

Snowb. Such a singing in my head. I thought myself so strong, and after all, I'm a poor creature!

Mrs. Peachd. After all, you are.

Snowb. Yes—I somehow do want bone and fibre. I'm a weak thing.

Mrs. Peachd. 'Twill be the sweeter duty of a wife to watch and tend the fragile flower.

Snowb. Do you think me such a selfish wretch that, now I know my weakness, I would be a burthen to you?

Mrs. Peachd. Oh, sir!

Snowb. A blight upon orange-blossoms?

Mrs. Peachd. Never name it!

Snowb. A paralysis to love? As the excellent Petgoose says—and here is!—

Enter PETGOOSE, c.

—Oh Doctor! You don't know how ill I am!

Petgoose. Ill! Why I left you in bed and—

Snowb. Do you know I think I've been wandering?

Petgoose. You have a wandering look. I see—brain gone upon a visit.

Mrs. Peachd. I will not hear this. Never believe him! No—my dear sir—your intellect was never brighter, purer! At this moment, it throws quite a blaze about you.

Snowb. You flatter me—(*aside.*)—but it won't do. It's plain she's beggared, she's so plaguy civil. No—no; I'm quite gone—not the remnant of a man. Quite a ruin.

Mrs. Peachd. A ruin that the heart-strings—like the ivy—still must cling around and—

Enter BURGONET, c.

Burgon. So, I am in time!

Snowb. The Captain! Sir, will you grant me one favor? You see my state? Will you allow me to die in private?

Burgon. Certainly not.

Petgoose. No! Then, sir, permit me to say, you intrude upon the privilege of the faculty.

Burgon. (*To SNOWBALL.*) You are the writer of this letter to that lady?

Mrs. Peachd. Doctor! My letter!

Petgoose. (*Aside to her.*) I merely named the contents; and the Captain would have it. (*Aside.*) Now, for my turn.

Snowb. (*Having vacantly looked over letter, returns it to BURGONET.*) I don't recollect a word of it.

Mrs. Peachd. What!

Burgon. That won't serve. A most lucid invitation to elope. Here is the usual outfit for the journey. "Burning hearts"—"unalterable love"—"an angel," and "raptures ever afterwards."

Snowb. I must have writ it when light-headed. Let me look again. (*BURGONET gives letter.*) Pooh! no man in his senses could write such stuff!

(*Is about to tear up the letter when MRS. PEACHDOWN snatches it from him.*)

Mrs. Peachd. Stuff! And is your affection—love—idolatry; all your fidelity, and all my hopes, all—all to end in stuff!

Snowb. My dear madam, you are no doubt very handsome and very good; but when a man calls a woman an angel, it's clear he's wandering.

Mrs. Peachd. Indeed? We shall see what a jury will say to that. What twelve immaculate men will give me for my wrongs. Yes, sir, I will take my broken heart into a court of law—

Snowb. Do. And see what they'll give you for the pieces.

Petgoose. Madam—Captain—pardon him, he is very ill!

Snowb. (*Rises.*) No I am not ill—I'm very well—never better. For I see the snare that's been spread for me—I see my danger—and am shocked into sudden health.

Petgoose. Don't mind him. He's very bad—but in these cases, the conceit of health is always strongest.

Burgon. I rejoice at your recovery. You can now answer me—you understand—and immediately.

Snowb. Your friend the Chevalier Podovy, whom you sent, and to whom I gave a diamond ring—that I should mightily like to have back again—your friend—

Burgon. My friend!

Mrs. Peachd. A wonderful man, the Chevalier! Quite a bit of the middle ages. He has invented a defence for England—"The Pocket Earthquake," to protect us from our enemies. A beautiful thing. I've given him money towards it.

Snowb. Well, this Chevalier, this man with the Pocket Earthquake, brought me a challenge to fight about that lady. Yes, an immoral duel!

Petgoose. But Mr. Snowball knew his social duties better.

Snowb. I did, that is—I do. So understand, I give up the lady.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) This is delightful. Give me up! And do you hope to sleep of nights? Renounce, reject me!

Snowb. All right, title, property, and interest in you.

Mrs. Peachd. But that is not so easy, sir—not so easy. This letter. There is not a drop of ink that isn't birdlime—there is not a syllable that isn't a mesh—not a word that isn't a trap—not a sentence that isn't a cage,—and here you are, sir; here you are, limed, snared, shut up, locked fast, mine, sir—mine!

Snowb. Horrible! But it can't be. No—I think better of my fellow-creatures.

Mrs. Peachd. What is sweeter, I shall have damages; your money, and not you. Yes, sir, the gold—the gold refined, without the clay.

Snowb. Now, it's all clear; you've dropt the mask, and the truth is dreadful. Now you look—

Burgon. Have a care—think twice. Any insolence to that lady, and fight you shall.

Snowb. Don't speak to me, sir. In my own house. I despise fighting; you shall see, sir, that I can respect the morals of my country, and throw myself upon the police. You shall see that—

Enter AUDLEY followed by CASSANDRA, c.

Audley. I am so happy, sir, to hear you're quite recovered.

Snowb. I am. I was ill—but I'm all the better for it.

Audley. Now strong enough, I hope, to hear the truth. Well, sir—it's all up. The Chancellor wouldn't have a word to say to us.

Snowb. What!

Audley. We're out of court, sir. Mr. Chumpem is much affected, but—

Snowb. Damn Mr. Chumpem! I've been deceived, tricked!

Petgoose. All in kindness, my good sir. Had you learned the truth at first, your system must have sunk under it. You have only been kept alive upon the tenderest of falsehoods..

Mrs. Peachd. In all your wanderings—and you have wandered—witness this letter—

Snowb. (*Aside.*) She may be mine, now. To be sure—I have wandered, but not there—at least, not there. I know it,

my brain has gone to and fro like a bird,—but there, there it settled !

Mrs. Peachd. Did it ? Then take it back again.

[*Returns letter, and retires up the stage, BURGONET following.*

Snowb. (Aside.) What does she mean ? Cassandra, where is Mr. Boggle ?

Cassan. Left the house with Rosemary.

Snowb. With Rosemary ! What for ?

Cassan. Luckily, here they come, and will inform you.

[*Retires.*

Enter APPLEFACE and ROSEMARY, C.

Snowb. There's something in your face that—what have you been about ?

Applef. Don't ask me. I refer you to the lady.

Snowb. What is this simpering ? Where have you been—what doing ?

Rosem. Been ! Been to church, and been doing matrimony.

Snowb. Church ! Matrimony !

Applef. Hush ! Not so loud—I hav'n't quite recovered the ceremony.

Snowb. Why, fellow, you're an impostor. I took you for an attorney—for Mrs. Peachdown's solicitor and—

Applef. And I'm happy to say, an impostor I was.

Snowb. And no attorney !

Applef. When you first had the pleasure of meeting me, I had then only for a time changed red ink into black.

Rosem. Being a soldier.

Snowb. A soldier !

Burgon. (*Coming down.*) I said so—I knew it. The fellow belongs to—

Rosem. Belongs to nobody but me. I have bought him out, and—(*handing parchment to Captain*)—and there is the receipt.

Audley. Quite correct, Captain. I negotiated the whole business.

Burgon. (*Returning parchment to ROSEMARY.*) I equally congratulate you upon your gain, and the army upon its loss.

Applef. Thank you for both. And Captain, will you favour an old comrade ? The gentleman who takes my place, may want this. (*Gives paper to BURGONET.*) Every man in the regiment has a copy. But as I've retired into married happiness, 'tis only right to my wife that—

Burgon. Why, what is this? A plan and lines, and—

Applef. Permit me. (*Takes paper.*) Put one leg of your compass here in Belgrave Square, then sweep your other leg one mile round.—In this circle, properly numbered, is the ground plan of five hundred different kitchens, with—as you perceive—the proper cupboards to retreat to in case of surprise. As I say, all the regiment have a copy.

Burgon. Rascal! And forage, I suppose, like fighting cocks?

Applef. Oh, better. Like fighting cocks that don't fight.

[*Retires up stage with ROSEMARY.*

Snowb. (*To PETGOOSE.*) Doctor, what's to be done? We're ruined.

Petgoose. Certainly not.

Snowb. Not.

Petgoose. No—you may be ruined; but the man of genius, like the eagle, can always renew himself. (*Aside.*) This brain is big, and the world shall see another pill! I only want a name—only a name!

[*Retires.*

Enter SERVANT, c.

Serv. The Chevalier Podovy—he asked, sir, if you were alone.

Audley. And you said he was? Very good. You must see him, sir; and hark you (*to Servant*), when you have shown the Chevalier in, send and fetch an officer. [*Exit Servant, c.*

Snowb. An officer.

Audley. I'm sure 'tis he—a begging letter-writer of the first quality. I've long been on his track and—hush!

[*All retire except SNOWBALL.*

Enter COOLCARD as Podovy, c.

Coolc. Ha! mon cher! You are better? Oui—you are—you are—

Snowb. (*Returning the shake of COOLCARD'S hand, at the same time pulling the ring from his finger, and putting it on his own.*) Much better. I may say, quite restored.

Coolc. Monsieur! ce gage d'amitié! That ring which you have give—

Snowb. Yes—I was wandering; but I'm come back to myself now, and so has my diamond.

Coolc. (Aside.) Has it? Doesn't know paste from real water. *C'est bien*—'tis ver well. May you wear him a tousand year; *mais, monsieur*, I am come—

Snowb. What about? Your Pocket Earthquake?

Coolc. That! You have heard of him?

Burgon. (All coming down.) Yes; we have all heard of the Earthquake.

Coolc. Ha! *Capitaine* and *Madame!* Ha! de ladies for de *beaux arts* after all!

Mrs. Peachd. 'Twere impossible to refuse the Chevalier; his invention is so wonderful. We may all sleep in our beds, and leave the Earthquake to take care of our enemies.

Burgon. Pray tell us about it.

Coolc. Certainement—avec plaisir. You sall understand dat England is so many mile round about. *C'est bien.* At every quarter mile we bury an earthquake no bigger—*qu'une tabatière*—den a snuff-box. Ver well. De foreign *soldat* no sooner put him foot on Breetish soil—ha! *cette belle Angleterre!*

Burgon. Proceed. The enemy has landed. Well?

Coolc. Oui, débarqué,—when crack—bang! de Earthquake open de shore all round and round, like one deep, deep trench—down go tousands and tousands of de *ennemi*; when—*comme cela*—de Earthquake shut himself up again, all is buried, all is quiet, all is swept away, and Breetannia vid a smiling face, rules her waves over and over de beech, while all de vinds, as if nothing had happened, whistle, “Breetons never sall be slaves.”

Petgoose. (Aside.) And there are people who bēlieve this! But the quackery of our time is astounding!

Burgon. I never dreamt there was such a benefactor among us. I suppose the Pocket Earthquake is patronised by—

Coolc. Tout le monde—everybody; *surtout*, 'specially de lady. Here is a list—no dat is not it—

Audley. (Snatching papers from him.) Yes, it is.

Coolc. What!

Audley. Begging-letters all, and every one with a separate complaint. So—Mr. Coolcard!

Snowb. Eh? No! Scoundrel!

Audley. Alias Busby Knox, M.A.

Petgoose. No—yes; it is—miscreant!

Audley. Alias Chevalier Podovy, alias—

Burgon. Cheat, impostor, knave—What have you to say? Confess!

Coolc. (*In a canting voice.*) My kind, charitable friends, I am well-nigh ashamed to stand before you ! I was born and bred in a respectable sphere of life, but the vice of the age, the unholy greed of mammon—an unrighteous desire to turn six-pences into sovereigns, has brought me to—

Burgon. Come, rascal, no canting, but confess.

Snowb. Yes, confess. What did you know of Lord Wintercough ?

Coolc. Only that he was dead. Whereupon—as is my custom—I sought out his relations.

Snowb. Only tell me this, and I'll forgive you. Why twice, —twice did you cheat me of five pounds ?

Coolc. My very dear sir, how was it possible for me not to cheat you, when you were so willing to be robbed ?

Petgoose. Scoundrel !

Coolc. I assure you, sir, people of my profession are harshly judged. Do as much as we may, still, when you consider the credulity of this town, we ought to have some little praise for what we leave undone.

Petgoose. The ruffian !

Coolc. I hope I have always respected the peace of families, and—

Petgoose. That's it !

Snowb. What's it ?

Petgoose. Nothing. (*Aside.*) That's it—the very name for my new pill. The Peace of Families ! I see it already in print—The Peace of Families' Pill. Beautiful !

Coolc. And as you have nobly pardoned me, I may depart ? Good sir, may I not ask the return of those letters ? (*To AUDLEY.*)

Audley. Certainly not.

Coolc. But, exceeding good sir, they are copyright.

Audley. Impudent scoundrel !

Coolc. I have done. Literature is too well used to suffering to complain. She bleeds—bleeds inwardly, and reviles not. Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you one and all a wholesome good morning. (*To SNOWBALL.*) You, sir, in particular, I wish every joy in life, and joy of your diamond. [Exit, c.

Audley and Burgon. Ha ! ha ! ha !

Petgoose. How can you laugh ? It's too shocking. (*Aside.*) “The Peace of Families !”—It quite grows upon me !

Enter SERVANT, c.

Serv. The chevalier is in custody, sir, and here's three carriages, with wedding favours.

Burgon. Very good. Have the men in armour arrived?

Serv. Not yet, sir.

Burgon. No? Nor the archers from Drury Lane—nor the crossbow-men from the Opera-house—nor the falcons from the Zoological Gardens?

Serv. Not yet, sir.

[*Exit, c.*

Snowb. What tomfoolery's this?

Burgon. Tomfoolery, sir! A solemn bridal procession from the middle ages, with the dwarf, the fool, and everything of the good old times to match.

Mrs. Peachd. (*Aside.*) Was there ever such audacity? But it's very charming.

Rosem. (*Aside to APPLEFACE.*) My love, what is this going for the middle ages?

Applef. Why, it's trying to make John Bull grow little again into John Calf,—but it won't do.

Rosem. (*Running to window.*) And there's such a crowd! And such beautiful dresses! Why, all the street's like a flower-garden!

Mrs. Peachd. And you think this will carry me? And so it shall, with one favour. Let 'em call a coach, so that we may escape, and to-morrow, or next day, or never mind when, we'll say no more of the beautiful past, but be married after the present fashion, like other humdrum and degenerate people.

Snowb. And you really marry him!

Audley. And perhaps, Captain, you'll allow us to join you?

Snowb. You—what—and Cassandra! Matched? Why—how—what are you, sir?

Audley. Why, sir, I am a gentleman by birth, education, and once of fortune. That's gone—it may come again.

Snowb. Why, I never suspected—you've made love very quietly.

Audley. Ha, sir! There the sincerity. 'Tis with love as with water. The deeper it flows, the quieter it is.

Snowb. Well, well. (*Aside.*) She's off my hands. Be happy, and all that. For when all's done, I see in the peace of families—

Petgoose. And I see in it a carriage, a town and country house, and money in foreign securities.

Snowb. What do you mean? All in the Peace of Families—

Petgoose. As, with the eyes of science, I see it. (*Aside.*) At two-and-nine per box. Beware of impostors, and mark the government stamp.

Snowb. And so, you won't have me, Mrs. Peachdown? Well, I dare say it's all for the best—

Mrs. Peachd. It couldn't be better, sir.

Snowb. I dare say, still it's hard. (*Aside.*) And for me, too—the shrewd, the sharp one. But so it is. What's the strength of man against the wisdom of woman? Even Hercules becomes a huswife, and Snowball himself a CATSPA.W.

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